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March to South Pass: Lieutenant William B. Franklin's Journal of the Kearney Expedition of 1845

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March to South Pass: Lieutenant William B. Franklin's Journal of the Kearny Expedition of 1845

Edited and Introduction
by Frank N. Schubert

Historical Division
Office of Administrative Services
Office of the Chief of Engineers

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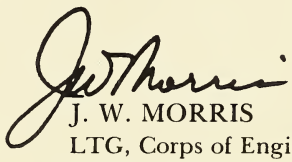
FOREWORD

This is the first in a new series of Corps of Engineers Historical Studies which we hope will make available to Corps personnel and the general public significant documents in Engineer history. Subsequent numbers in the series will reprint previously published but difficult to obtain reports or hitherto unpublished archival material. In either case, publications in the series will seek to create a better understanding of the significant role of the Corps of Engineers in American history.

The journal of Lieutenant William B. Franklin's march to South Pass with the 1st Dragoons is a fitting selection for the first publication in this series. Unsung and virtually unknown outside of a small group of historians, Franklin has received only brief mention in books on western exploration. Moreover, his vivid narrative has not been used in reconstructing the story of the development of the American West.

With its clear depiction of the terrain and insights into the coming clash between whites and Indians on the high plains, Lieutenant Franklin's journal takes us back over 130 years to a time when Engineer officers served their country as explorers, topographers, and cartographers. In so doing, the narrative highlights a major Engineer contribution to the growth of the Republic.



J. W. MORRIS
LTG, Corps of Engineers
Chief of Engineers

PREFACE

The journal of Lieutenant William B. Franklin, published here for the first time, is reproduced verbatim. Spelling, stylistic foibles, and grammatical flaws have not been changed so that the flavor of the document could be retained. To the extent possible, people mentioned in the narrative have been identified in notes appended to the journal. Readers interested in more information on places discussed by Franklin should consult the literature cited in the bibliography and notes.

Even on a project as small as this one, a historian does not work alone. Among those who assisted in preparing this publication were William G. Bell, U.S. Army Center of Military History; Leigh G. DeLay, Nebraska State Historical Society; Marie Capps and Herbert Leventhal, U.S. Military Academy Library and Archives; Catherine T. Engel, State Historical Society of Colorado; Frances H. Stadler and Kathleen S. Schoene, Missouri Historical Society; Timothy Nenninger, National Archives; Irene Schubert, University of Maryland Libraries; and John T. Greenwood and Christine M. Malone, Historical Division, Office, Chief of Engineers. It is a pleasure to acknowledge their assistance.

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The Kearny Expedition and its Journals, an Overview

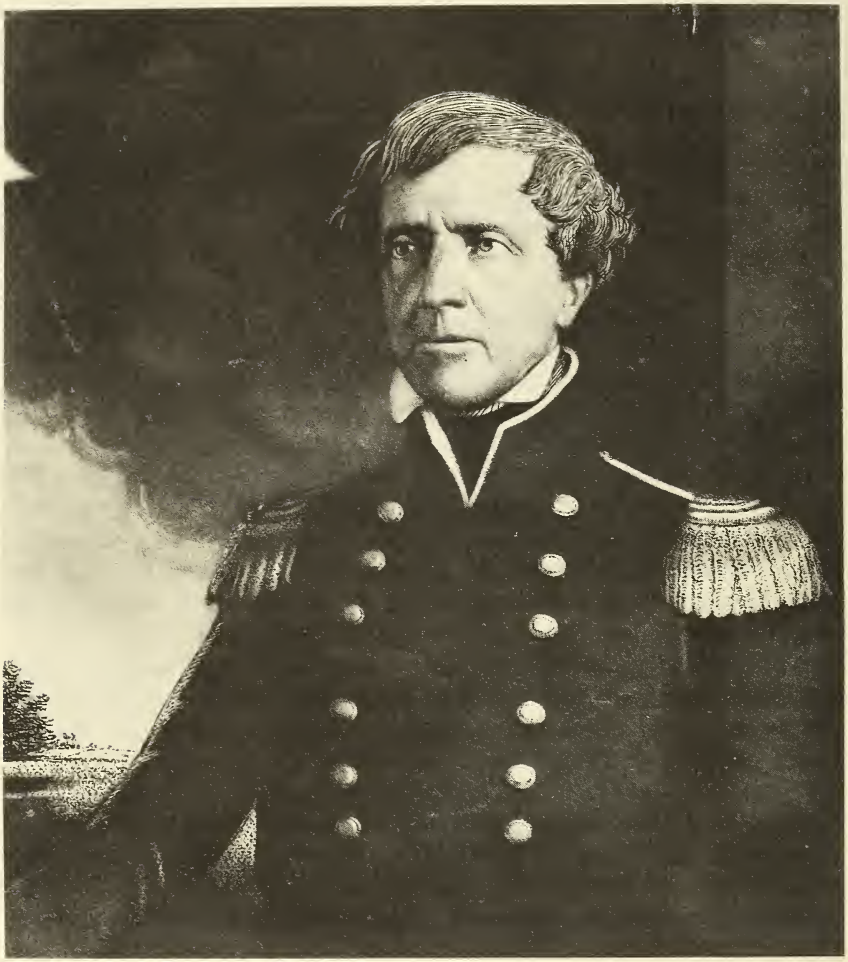
Sunday, 18 May 1845, dawned bright and clear at Fort Leavenworth. Somnolence usually characterized Sunday mornings at the post just west of the Missouri River in territory not yet called Kansas, but today was different. Even while the rising sun burned the mist off of the prairie grass, the post bustled. In the stables soldiers blanketed and saddled their horses; at the storerooms teamsters loaded wagons with hardtack and coffee, picks and shovels. When all was ready, fifteen officers and 250 men of the First Dragoons mounted up in the Missouri valley sunshine. At a signal from Colonel Stephen W. Kearny, they rode out the main gate in a long column of twos, bound far up the Platte River to the Rocky Mountains and South Pass, the gateway to Oregon.

The size of the expedition indicated its importance. The entire Army contained only two mounted regiments, the First and Second Dragoons. Colonel Kearny's command was fully a fourth of this cavalry force, a major investment in manpower.

Among the reasons for such a substantial foray to the mountains, protection of emigrant wagon trains loomed large. With the trickle of Oregon-bound homesteaders becoming a flood, hundreds of conestoga wagons were leaving the jumping-off places on the Missouri. As their numbers grew, so did the danger of war with the plains Indians. The tribes through whose lands the Oregon Trail passed—the Sioux, the Pawnee, the Cheyenne—did not often raid emigrant wagons. Their more frequent wars with each other constituted a greater menace to the safety of the Trail.

Deteriorating relations with Mexico underscored the need for an understanding with the plains tribes. If war began on the Rio Grande, forces would not be available to protect the Oregon Trail. Colonel Kearny's dragoons would display the flag, flash their sabers, and fire their howitzers. The show of force would convince the tribes to allow the emigrants unimpeded passage and secure the Army's rear in the event of war with Mexico.

The prospect of operations against Mexico also created the need for accurate information regarding that nation's northern provinces and the adjacent lands. The best map of the fledgling Republic of Texas, drawn by Lieutenant William H. Emory of the Topographical Engineers, was based extensively on the work and sometimes the imaginations of earlier cartographers.[1] Of New Mexico and California, both still in Mexican



Stephen W. Kearny. Library of Congress.

hands, the Army knew even less. To remedy this lack of data, topographical engineers went into the borderlands to examine the terrain, trace main routes of travel, note the availability of wood, water, and grass for armies on the move, and to record longitudes and latitudes for maps. Lieutenants James W. Abert and William H. Peck examined the Raton Pass approach to Santa Fe, while Lieutenant John C. Frémont, the dark-complected and flamboyant Pathfinder, went all the way to California. Another topog, Lieutenant William B. Franklin, rode up the Platte with Kearny.

Franklin's task as a topographer was fairly simple. Frémont had already mapped the Oregon Trail, and Josiah Gregg had just completed a map of the well-worn Santa Fe route over which Kearny planned to return. Franklin had only to trace the portion in between, from Fort Laramie on the Platte to Bent's Fort on the Arkansas. In sum the expedition was two parts show of force and one part reconnaissance. On

the Oregon road, the Indians would see American arms for the first time. To the south, along the Santa Fe Trail, the expedition would pass near Mexican territory. The Mexican government would not see Kearny's force but would surely learn of its proximity.[2] In between was the reconnaissance, the result of which would be Lieutenant Franklin's map.

From the time the Dragoons left Fort Leavenworth, they traveled fast and light, with only seventeen supply wagons, fifty sheep, and twenty-five beeves. The huge herds of buffalo they encountered en route provided another and more plentiful mobile commissary. Thus supplied and fed, the expedition accomplished its mission with remarkable speed. Averaging over twenty miles a day, the men of the First covered the nearly 600 miles to Fort Laramie high up on the north fork of the Platte in four weeks. After a one-day stopover for a council with the large Sioux bands camped nearby, they took to the saddle again. Barely two weeks later Kearny and his troopers stood atop South Pass, held a regimental muster on the continental divide, and turned toward home. After a long trek down along the eastern slopes of the Rockies, past modern Denver to Bent's Fort, the dragoons turned eastward on the Santa Fe Trail. They arrived at Fort Leavenworth on 24 August, having ridden over 2,000 miles in ninety-nine days. The march of the First Dragoons was truly "an outstanding example of cavalry mobility."[3]

Four officer-diarists, including Lieutenant Franklin, chronicled the successful completion of the long march. The high incidence of diaries among the fifteen officers is not nearly as remarkable as it might seem. They wrote in an age in which large numbers of people kept personal journals, sometimes recording participation in historic events or—in the Puritan tradition—documenting spiritual progress toward a state of grace.[4] So prevalent was the practice that historians can draw on about 800 first-hand accounts of the westward migration along the Platte River to Fort Laramie.[5]

Captain Philip St. George Cooke, commander of K Company on the march to South Pass, kept the best-known record of the expedition. Cooke's *Scenes and Adventures in the Army,* first published in 1857 and reissued in 1973, covered his entire career as an officer and included a substantial section on the Kearny expedition.[6] A favorite source book for students of the Indian-fighting Army, Cooke's memoir has become a frontier classic.

Less well known and more difficult to obtain than Cooke's *Scenes and Adventures* is Lieutenant James H. Carleton's "Occidental Reminiscences." The narrative first appeared in twelve installments during 1845-1846 in *The Spirit of the Times,* a weekly sporting newspaper printed in New York. Another weekly, *The Missouri Western Democrat,* reprinted the series a few months later, but a century passed before the individual segments were assembled with Carleton's account of Major Clifton Wharton's 1844 march to the Pawnee villages on the Platte. Together they were published in a limited edition as *The Prairie*

Philip St. George Cooke. National Archives.

Logbooks.[7] In spite of their relative obscurity, the "logbooks" have provided much valuable material to historians. As Merrill J. Mattes, the historian of the Platte River emigration, observed, the march of the Dragoons was "brilliantly recorded by Capt. (later Lt. Col.) Philip St. George Cooke and Lt. J. Henry Carleton."[8]

Among the common characteristics of these two journals, one stands out—they were intended for publication. As a consequence both

sometimes strove self-consciously to be amusing and clever and at others earnest and profound. Cooke's in particular contained lengthy digressions on all manner of subjects, disguised as dialogues with a fictitious "friend." Lieutenant Carlton showed more restraint, but his prose tended to be somewhat overblown, as when he referred to the rise of the morning sun "with his big jolly countenance."[9]

Carleton, who knew exactly what he was doing, explained his style to readers of "Occidental Reminiscences." After a downpour on 26 May, he wrote, "it could not possibly have rained so hard at the time of the flood." Then he accounted for his choice of words. His journal, he argued, was not an official report, in which such metaphors were inappropriate, where "horse" had to suffice in lieu of "proud and fiery steed," and "harness" supplanted "splendid trappings." Such restraint, reasonable in government reportage, did not apply. "Suppose we indulge in a flight of fancy," Carleton said. "Surely there can be no harm in that."[10]

The other two journalists of the expedition produced official accounts. Lieutenant Henry S. Turner, the regimental adjutant, wrote his for the records of the Adjutant General;[11] Lieutenant Franklin for the Topographical Bureau.[12] Compared to the Cooke and Carleton narratives, these two were terse, blunt and direct. Where Cooke waxed eloquent on the fates that caused an old and decrepit buffalo to stray from the herd and wander too near the Dragoon column,[13] Franklin said merely that "an old buffalo bull was killed to-day but he was too old and too tough for food." By the same token, while Carleton likened the migration to Oregon to the voyage of the *Mayflower,* Turner counted Oregon-bound wagons.[14] To a large extent, the divergences in style and substance among their accounts reflected their different purposes.

So, while the popular accounts of Cooke and Carleton perhaps merited their acclaim, they told at once too much and too little. Often they strayed from the story of the expedition to record private musings and small witticisms. Turner and Franklin, on the other hand, laid no claims to the license Carleton took as his own. They always stayed close to the facts of the march, yet their narratives were far from dry or sterile. They frequently included important details ignored by their more verbose comrades. For example, Turner provided the most complete discussion of Colonel Kearny's talks with the Sioux chief Bull Tail, and only Franklin paid any attention to the views of the Cheyenne leader Old Soldier.

Turner and Franklin were of an age that was both literate and literary, and their unpublished manuscripts reflected their time. The reports of Army officers on the frontier, whether intended for publication as public documents or not, contained crisp, vivid descriptions of the landscape and encounters with Indians.[15] Hamilton Gardner's assessment of Turner's journal as "an extremely well written military document, possessing a refreshing color and life which are not dimmed by purely statistical information,"[16] applies as well to Franklin's and numerous others.

Despite the substantive and literary value of the Turner and Franklin

journals, only Turner's has received any attention. His narrative provided much of the basis for an article on the expedition that focused on Captain Cooke,[17] and his accounts of later campaigns of the Mexican War found their way into print after many years.[18] Franklin's, on the other hand, remained unpublished and unused, except in a highly condensed summary version that combined bits of his and Turner's journals into a three-page appendix to Colonel Kearny's official report.[19] For Franklin's narrative, which has lain in the War Department files for over 130 years, publication is long overdue.

When Franklin joined the Kearny expedition, he was just twenty-two years old. Younger than the other three diarists by some years, Franklin had graduated at the head of the United States Military Academy class of 1843 before his assignment to the hydrographic survey of the Great Lakes. Then came his service with Kearny, followed by action during the war with Mexico at Buena Vista. Like Carleton, Cooke, and Turner he received a brevet promotion for gallantry and meritorious service in that war. Until his resignation from the Army in 1866, his career continued along a common Engineer pattern. Between the wars with Mexico and the Confederacy, he worked on civil projects. In Washington, D.C., for several of those years, he supervised construction of the Capitol Dome and an addition to the Treasury Building. After the Civil War began, he returned to military duties and rose rapidly to the rank of Major General of Volunteers, commanding in succession a regiment, a brigade, and a corps. General Ulysses Grant highly respected his abilities as a commander, but Franklin never received the post he wanted as Commanding General of the Army of the Potomac.[20]

After the war and his resignation, Franklin divided his time between business, engineering, and politics. For twenty-two years he worked as vice-president and general manager of the Colt Fire Arms Manufacturing Company. In addition he presided over the commission that built Connecticut's new state capitol and supervised the actual construction. As a Democratic presidential elector in 1876, he voted for Samuel J. Tilden in the disputed election won by Rutherford B. Hayes. General Franklin also chaired the board of judges for engineering and architecture at the centennial exhibition at Philadelphia and represented the United States as commissioner-general at the Paris Exposition of 1888. He was eighty years old when he died at Hartford in 1903.[21]

Franklin's journal of Colonel Kearny's 1845 march to the Rockies complements the previously published work of Carleton and Cooke. Briefest of all four first-hand narratives, it contains unique insights into the thoughts of Indians and emigrants alike. The keen and well-trained eye of the topographical engineer, combined with occasional flashes of humor, yields fresh perspectives on the landscape as well. As a major part of the historical record of the Kearny expedition, Franklin's journal adds to our knowledge of the Oregon Trail crossing and the operations of the frontier Army.

William B. Franklin. United States Military Academy Archives.

NOTES

1. Carl I. Wheat, "Mapping the American West 1540-1857," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 64 (1954), pp. 107-07.
2. David S. Lavender, *Bent's Fort* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1954), p. 244.
3. Hamilton Gardner, "Captain Philip St. George Cooke and the March of the 1st Dragoons to the Rocky Mountains in 1845," *Colorado Magazine*, 30 (October, 1953), p. 269.
4. Historian Perry Miller noted the pervasiveness of the Puritan tradition of keeping diaries: "It is probable that almost every literate Puritan kept some sort of journal..., and the habit became so thoroughly ingrained in the New England character that it remained a practice with various Yankees long after they had ceased to be Puritans, to the great enrichment of our political and literary history...." Miller, *The Puritans* (New York: American Book Company, 1938), p. 461.
5. Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline Via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), pp. 523-65.
6. Philip St. George Cooke, *Scenes and Adventures in the Army, or the Romance of Military Life* (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1857). The book was republished in New York by Arno Press in 1973.
7. James H. Carleton, *The Prairie Logbooks: Dragoon Campaigns to the Pawnee Villages in 1844, and to the Rocky Mountains in 1845*, ed. by Louis Pelzer (Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1943). On the publication history of Carleton's journal, see Aurora Hunt, *Major General James Henry Carleton, 1814-1873, Western Frontier Dragoon* (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1958), p. 73.
8. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, p. 14.
9. Carleton, "Occidental Reminiscences, Chapter II," *The Spirit of the Times*, 15 (January 3, 1846), p. 531.
10. Carleton, "Occidental Reminiscences, Chapter IV," *The Spirit of the Times*, 15 (February 14, 1846), p. 604.
11. Turner, "Journal of an Expedition Performed in the Summer of 1845 by 5 Companies of the 1st Dragoons under the Command of Colonel S.W. Kearny," Letters Received, Adjutant General's Office, 1822-1860, National Archives, Record Group 94.
12. The original Franklin manuscript is "Report of Lt. Franklin of the Corps of Top'l Engineers to Col. S. W. Kearny 1st Dragoons commanding the Expedition to the South Pass of the Rocky Mts 1845," Letters Received, Topographical Bureau, National Archives, Record Group 77.

13. Cooke, *Scenes and Adventures,* pp. 310-11.
14. Carleton, "Occidental Reminiscences, Chapter I," *The Spirit of the Times,* 15 (December 27, 1845), p. 519. Turner's statistical table, appended to his journal entry for 15 July, listed the captains of each wagon train, and the number of men, women, children, cattle, horses and mules, and wagons in each.
15. The popularity of these reports continues to this day, and many have been republished of late. Among them are the following reports of Engineer officers on the frontier: Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence, eds., *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont,* 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970); Odie B. Faulk, ed., *Derby's Report on Opening the Colorado* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969); Grant Foreman, ed., *A Pathfinder in the Southwest, The Itinerary of Lieutenant A. W. Whipple During His Explorations for a Railroad Route from Fort Smith to Los Angeles in the Years 1853 and 1854* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941); John Galvin, ed., *Western America in 1846-1847: The Original Travel Diary of Lieutenant J.W. Abert who Mapped New Mexico for the United States Army* (San Francisco: John Howell, 1966); Frank McNitt, ed., *Navaho Expedition: Journal of a Military Reconnaissance from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the Navaho Country Made in 1849 by Lieutenant James H. Simpson* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964); Ross Calvin, ed., *Lieutenant Emory Reports: A Reprint of Lieutenant W. H. Emory's Notes of a Military Reconnaissance* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1951).
16. Gardner, "Captain Philip St. George Cooke and the March of the 1st Dragoons," p. 247.
17. Gardner, "Captain Philip St. George Cooke and the March of the 1st Dragoons," *passim.*
18. Dwight L. Clarke, ed., *The Original Journals of Henry Smith Turner With Stephen Watts Kearny in New Mexico and California 1846-1847* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966).
19. "Abstract of Journals Kept By Lt. Turner, adjutant 1st dragoons, and Lt. Franklin, Top. Eng., During an Expedition Performed in the Summer of 1845, by Five Companies of the 1st Dragoons Under the Command of Colonel S. W. Kearny," appended to *Report of a Summer Campaign to the Rocky Mountains & c., in 1845,* 29th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Document 1 (1845).
20. Thomas M. Spaulding, "William Buel Franklin," *Dictionary of American Biography,* III (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 601-02; John W. De Peyster, *Personal and Military History of Philip Kearny, Major-General United States Volunteers* (Elizabeth, New Jersey: Palmer & Co., 1870), p. 113; Bruce Catton, *Grant Takes Command* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 23.
21. Spaulding, "William Buel Franklin," pp. 601-02.

Washington, D. C.
Nov. 5th 1845

To

Col S. W. Kearny
Comg 1st Drags

Sir

I have the honor herewith to transmit you my journal, and as I did not arrive at Fort Leavenworth in time to report to you there, I think that it is due to myself that the reason for this should be explained. This I hope will excuse the short account of my journey to the Fort which follows.

On the 23rd of April last I was ordered by Col. Abert[1] to report to you at Fort Leavenworth. On the 24th I left Washington for that purpose intending to pass through Buffalo on my way out in order to change a box chronometer which I had for a pocket one, and to get an azimuth compass. I was obliged too to stay a few hours in New York to purchase the astronomical books necessary for the expedition.

I arrived at Buffalo on the 1st of May and having finished my business there was ready to start the next day, but no boat leaving could not get off until the 3d and was then on account of storms on the Lakes and the low water of the Illinois River fifteen days in getting to St. Louis, arriving there on the 17th of May. I expected to report to you at St. Louis but heard on my arrival that you had left the city several days before, and that by this time you had probably started from the Fort with the command. This was discouraging news, but making a few preparations, I started in a boat that left that night, and arriving at the Fort on the afternoon of the 22nd, learned that the command had started on the 18th and were by this time far on their way to the Mountains, so far that I had but little hope of overtaking them.

However, orders having been left by you that if I arrived within a week after the departure of the command I should follow you, I commenced preparations to start as quick as possible. How I progressed after this you will learn from my journal, which, however uninteresting, I have tried to make a fair record of the distances passed over after I joined the command.

Very respy
Your obdt. servt
W. B. FRANKLIN
Lt. Topl. Engs.

JOURNAL

The day after my arrival at Fort Leavenworth, I was fitted out with an escort of four men and a couple of pack horses to carry my instruments, baggage, and the provisions for the party., This party consisting of the four dragoons, my servant, myself, and Mr. Simpson[2] of St. Louis, a gentleman who was to accompany the expedition as an amateur but who like myself had been left. He having had some experience in this kind of life so entirely new to me, was a great acquisition to our little party, assisting us greatly by his advice, and indeed afterwards proposing the only plan by which we could have possibly overtaken the command.

It had been my intention to take some observations at Fort Leavenworth for the purpose of rating my chronometers, and to serve as a basis for computing the Longitudes obtained by daily observations on the Sun, but it was impossible; I was only at the Fort about 20 hours and during the whole of that time neither Sun or stars were visible. Had I waited for two successive clear days I should probably have never reached the command, as it was rainy a long time after I started.

About 2 o'clock on the 23rd of May (Friday) we started, a drizzling rain had been falling nearly all day, and the sky gave every indication of a long storm. We intended to camp that night at Independence Creek, about 15 miles NW of Leavenworth, and we arrived there about sundown but well wet and tired, the men complaining that we had not made a fair start, and foreboding that the journey would be an unlucky one on that account. Fortunately they did not recollect that it was Friday or their forebodings would have been still darker. They came to the conclusion that they might as well begin their hardships at once, so although it was raining they clubbed their blankets and did not pitch their tent, preferring to sleep in the rain.

Mr. Simpson and myself having taken a hearty supper of pork and bread went to bed and slept soundly until morning.

Saturday. 24. As it had continued to rain all night everything was wet this morning, and we could not make an early start. It was about 8 o'clock when we moved on and at 12 o'clock we reached the second encampment of the command at a small stream called Clough Creek after a Dragoon who fell dead from his horse at this place last year.[3] There was a little timber on it, and it made a very good camp. We halted here for about an hour and a half, in order to rest our horses and let them eat grass, and continuing our march in the afternoon reached the 3d camp of the command on a branch of the Stranger about sundown. We thought at the

time that this was a long march, but in fact it was the shortest we made, and before we reached the command found that 50 miles on a day would have to be the march if we intended to overtake them in the required time, which was about five days.

The country passed over during to-day's and yesterday's marches cannot be surpassed in beauty by any of the prairie country of the West. It is traversed by numerous small streams sufficient to water it well, and most of these are well timbered principally with cotton-wood. It is what is called rolling prairie, is very fertile, and produces a luxurious grass interspersed with numerous flowers. The resin weed, a plant resembling the sunflower grows in great abundance, and during the month of August when it is in blossom lends a very gay appearance to the prairie. This is the general character of the country from Fort Leavenworth to the Little Blue River, where there is a very perceptible change. Although very beautiful these continuous green slopes very soon become monotonous, and the eye continually wishes for a forest or mountain to rest itself upon. We were to see neither of these for some time to come.

In consequence of this monotony, each days march does not need a particular description, and I shall therefore say but little more of the country from here to the point at which I joined the command.

Sunday. 25. We made an early start this morning, and after continual travelling did not reach the fourth camp of the command until past noon, we made our usual halt here, and encamped at the fifth camp about sundown. To-day we discovered that the backs of the pack horses had become badly rubbed, and fears were entertained that they would not be able to carry us much further at the rate we were then travelling; this was very unfortunate but there was no remedy for it and the next morning we started again, the pack-horses looking very badly, and indeed all the horses appeared very much jaded and tired.

They had all been living on oats, and doing nothing for some time before we started, and the sudden change from the oats without work to grass with very hard work was very severe, and likely to try their mettle too much.

We met two provision waggons this morning which were returning to the Fort. They had been emptied of their contents, and there being no further use for them had been sent back. The waggoners told us they had left the command the day before and that they (the Dragoons) were travelling at least 25 miles a day. This was discouraging enough, and after pointing out to us a cutoff by which we saved two or three miles they left us. We made a halt at the sixth camp of the command about 2 o'clock, not being able to strike it before that time though we had travelled incessantly from 6 o'clock in the morning. We then made for the next camp the 7th, but travelling continually until dark did not find it, and camped by the bank of a small stream, near which is the grave of a young man from St. Louis who died here last year. He had started on a prairie tour supposing that it would either kill or cure and had not been gone a month when he

died and was buried at this place. A cross marks the spot, and a pile of stones covers the grave to keep the body from the wolves which would have torn it up as soon as his party had left, had it not been for this precaution.

About 3 o'clock this afternoon we came into the Oregon trail which we hardly leave again until our arrival at Laramie a second time. From this point the road is of course much plainer and being well beaten, our horses travelled with greater ease than on the Dragoon trail.

Just after we were fixed in camp we descried in the distance three figures on horseback, at first supposing them to be Indians, we kept rather shy of them, but getting closer we found that they were white men. They had come back from a party which was ahead to find a horse and three mules which had escaped two nights before, and after riding sixty miles and nearly killing their horses, had found the strayed animals but were unable to catch any of them. The mules gave them a long race always continuing in the direction of the settlements. The horse followed them willingly as long as they kept their heads turned from the West but the moment he found that they wanted him to turn back, he scampered off as fast as his legs would carry him. They chased him in this way for about four hours and finally had to leave him. They were now on their return and had eaten nothing since the evening before so that the supper of pork and bread that we gave them was very acceptable. After satisfying themselves, and lighting their pipes they started off for their camp which was about 30 miles ahead, bidding us a very affectionate good bye, and in a much better humor than they were when they entered our camp.

During the night we had a tremendous thunder storm one of the longest I think I ever saw. The thunder and lightning were terrific, and the rain fell in torrents for more than an hour, fortunately we were encamped among some high trees which sheltered us in a great degree from the wind or we would have been blown away. We were thoroughly wet at any rate, as the tent was no protection against such torrents of water as then fell, and when it grew light both horses and men presented an aspect dismal enough.

Tuesday. 27. This morning after an examination of the pack-horses, by the advice of Mr. Simpson I resolved to leave them with three of the men, and accompanied by Mr. S. and one man to try to overtake the command by to-morrow (Wednesday) evening. We thought that by travelling all day and a good deal at night we might succeed in this, and I now believe it was the only way in which I could have possibly overtaken you. The packhorses were so jaded that it was impossible for them to travel more than 30 miles a day. About 9 o'clock we set out and passed the seventh camp of the command in 4 or 5 miles. About 3 o'clock we came up to an Oregon company encamped just West of the eighth camp. This camp we thought we had passed some distance behind, and only finding it now we gave up all hope of camping that night before 12 or 1 o'clock. About 7 o'clock we arrived at the camp of the persons who had supped with us the

evening before, and they reciprocated our kindness to them by giving us supper to-night. They lived much better than we did, and as we had eaten nothing since morning we did ample justice to their supper. We travelled on until about 1 o'clock, and bivouacked upon the prairie where we found some grass not very good to be sure, but our horses were hungry enough to have eaten any thing at that time. About four o'clock we resumed our journey, and in about 10 miles struck the Little Blue River on which we expected to find the command. This is a small stream, about 30 yds wide at this time, well timbered with Cotton Wood, and having a bottom from a quarter to half a mile wide. The bottom had a very good soil producing good grass, but the surrounding hills are very barren, and it is at this point we first have an idea of the country we are to pass over on our way to the Mountains. The grass was very scant, and as far as the eye could reach on the North side of the river nothing was to be seen but this barren expanse of prairie possessing none of the beauty so striking in those farther to the East.

We continued up the river passing an Oregon company about noon who informed us that the command had passed them yesterday, this company had a great many cattle, and their progress was slow on that account. About noon too we halted for an hour, and took a lunch of raw pork and hard bread. Our horses were so tired that we could not force them to go faster than a walk. About 5 o'clock we came to the conclusion that we could not reach the camp with our horses that night, so we sent the Dragoon, who had the best horse on to the camp, giving him the mail and sending for fresh horses by him. We followed on until about 10 o'clock, when finding no signs of the camp we again bivouacked. About eleven we were awoke by the return of our messenger who had a couple of led horses with him furnished by the kindness of the officers, taking these we arrived at the camp about 2 o'clock on the morning of the 29th.

In the morning I reported to you, and was ordered to wait with four Dragoons and a couple of mules for the remainder of my party, which I expected would be up in a couple of days. This was rather a solitary business, but my horse was so tired that it was probably the best plan, and as my men came up on the morning of the 30th about 11 o'clock, I was not left alone as long as I expected. That day we went to the head of the Blue about 15 miles from where we camped, and the next morning started for the Platte River in a N.W. direction reaching it in about 15 miles.

An Oregon company had been encamped below us the evening before and the next morning as we were about starting, we heard loud complaints from them that six of their horses had been stolen by the Pawnees during the night. They pointed out the moccasin tracks and found the pieces of the hobbles which the Indians had cut. I had avoided the same mishap by encamping on the opposite side of the river a little above them.

The country between the Blue and the Platte is very barren, there are ranges of hills much like the undulating land which formed the rolling

prairie but wanting the verdure with which these latter are clothed. I did not pay particular attention to the soil but believe it to be a mixture of sand and marl which ought to be fertile, probably it is on account of its dryness that it is not, though when we passed over it there were puddles of water in the hollows which had been left by a heavy rain the night before. We reached the river bottom about six miles from the river, which had a little timber along its banks at the point where we struck it. As it was a hot, unpleasant day the men prepared to take a bath, and one of them deceived by the appearance of the river dove head foremost into the water, he rose (though) (immediately) nearly stunned by the shock, for instead of finding the river seven or eight feet deep as one would judge from its appearance it was hardly above his ankles; they satisfied themselves after this by wading about without attempting at more diving. The sufferer had been deceived by my servant who went in first, and pretended to be swimming about, when he was crawling on his hands and knees.

The river is here about half a mile wide but very shallow. The water is very muddy resembling in taste and appearance that of the Missouri. It has a peculiar clayey taste which becomes very agreeable after one is used to it, but it is at first rather unpleasant. The valley is at this point about ten miles wide, but not fertile, it is rather sandy and is probably overflowed in the spring when a large deposit of sand is left by the water. In crossing the divide between the two rivers I noticed a very beautiful variety of cactus, almost the only flower to be seen, it flourished well even in the most sandy soil, and we found it from this point as far West as Laramie.

After a rest of about two hours we again started and travelled along the banks of the river. We passed an Oregon party on the way, and some of the company informed us that the Dragoons were now quite near us. About fifteen miles from where we first struck the river we found the camp, and at last were fairly at our solitary journey's end.

We received a hearty greeting from the Officers of the command, and it was almost like getting back to the frontier once more.

June 1. This morning we started at half past six, our road keeping along the right bank of the river, and after travelling about 25 miles we camped at four o'clock near some cotton wood trees. About six o'clock we had quite a brisk shower, which was the only rain of any consequence that we had, until we were on the Arkansas on our return.

I will mention here that the command consisted of five companies of Dragoons fifty men in each company, these were accompanied when I joined by a baggage and provision train of seventeen waggons most of which were drawn by mules. The companies marched by twos, the Officers of each company at its head. The Colonel took the lead followed by the staff, and the companies came immediately behind. Then came the waggons, followed by the guard consisting of a commissioned officer and twelve or fourteen men; the cattle brought up the rear, and they with the waggons generally arrived in camp about an hour after the command.

The tents were generally struck about half past six in the morning and

we travelled from that time until nine, a halt was then made to allow the waggons to come up and to give the horses as much grass as they could eat in that time which was about half an hour. We then went on till about twelve when we made another halt of an hour generally: We then marched until we encamped which was at four in the afternoon usually, and though sometimes a little earlier very rarely later.

The valley of the river during to-days march was generally about eight miles wide presenting a flat surface as far as the base of the hills, which rose gently to perhaps the height of one hundred feet. The timber is very scarce and we passed but little good grass during the whole day. It is a most uninteresting country in every respect. Signs of buffalo began to appear to-day, and we passed a great many of their trails heading to the river. The soil is still bad, the principal ingredient being sand, cacti were quite plenty during the day.

The buffalo trails previously mentioned are about a foot wide, and are generally worn about six inches into the ground. They cross the gullies and ravines at the easiest places and are sometimes very convenient as we found before our journey's end.

June 2. This morning all hands were anxiously looking out for buffalo, and towards noon the signs became very plenty, trails crossed the road every few hundred yards, and in some cases we could distinguish fresh tracks of the buffalo. They had been here very lately, for when it was time to look for a camp, we found that they had eaten up nearly all the grass. Fortunately about half past five we found a place where the grass had not been burnt last year, and this afforded a scanty pasturage for our horses. Two or three Oregon companies were passed to-day but they were all small.

The valley this morning was about 15 miles wide, but soon narrowed to its usual width, about 8 miles. The hills begin to increase in height and become very picturesque, a pleasing change from the monotonous slopes we had been straining our eyes upon ever since we left the Fort.

The general direction of our march to-day was a little N of W, and the distance travelled was 32 miles.

June 3. The valley this morning is about five miles wide, and gradually narrows until in about seven miles from camp it is no more than three miles wide. It then widens again and in the evening is about five miles in width, the timber during the afternoon's march is much more plenty than it was during the morning and throughout yesterday's march. The grass is very scant throughout the whole distance.

About 10 o'clock we passed an Oregon party which had started from St. Joseph in Missouri. It originally contained 54 waggons, and 1000 head of cattle, but on account of the unweildiness of such a large party they had divided and about half of them were in this party. The other half was ahead.

In the morning the sky was overcast and threatened rain, but towards noon it cleared in a great degree. The wind was high during the whole

Emigrant train crossing the South Platte. National Archives.

day. The direction of to-days march was N 60° W, and the distance 23 miles.

We encamped in a beautiful spot surrounded on all sides by trees, and just on the bank of the river, but the grass was not very good, this having been a favorite grazing place for the buffalo. We were obliged to pass through a dense thicket to get to our camp, but the way had been opened for us by the buffalo which had left large quantities of their wool sticking to the bushes. The Colonel's tent was near these bushes and early in the evening his horses pulled up their picket-pins and scampered off towards the hills. Many surmises were made as to what frightened them, one of the men said it was a buffalo, another that it was a bear, and the cause of the fright whatever it was, was soon magnified into a grizzly bear. They were not found that evening.

June 4. This morning we made a late start having to wait for the lost horses, they were found about 8 o'clock, on the top of a hill about 7 miles distant, looking very much bewildered, and seemed very glad to be caught again.

About 7 miles from camp we passed the junction of the forks; this point is difficult to determine, as there are several small islands near it which extend for some distance down the river. At this point the hills on the South side begin to be less precipitous, the valley wider, and the grass is better. The South Fork runs about two miles from the foot of the hills on that side, and the North Fork about five from the foot of the hills on the North side.

At noon we discerned a herd of buffalo feeding on the river bottom. The hunters were immediately sent out, and after a very pretty chase several were killed. Every one becomes excited looking on, and wishes to take part in the chase. But our horses were most of them too poor to be run at their full speed for a mile or two, and then travel between 20 and 30 miles the next day, so that most of us resisted the temptation. The herd consisted

entirely of cows and calves and they became an easy prey to our hunters without a very long chase. The calves were very bewildered, and one poor little fellow mistook the command for his herd and was very nearly captured alive. He discovered his mistake however, and his legs saved him.

We marched between 18 & 20 miles to-day, and our direction was about 20° N of W.

The geological character of the valley does not change perceptably. To-day we first noticed the marly sandstone which abounds the vallies of the two forks, and extends with but few interruptions from this place to the Sweetwater R. It is this stone of which the Chimney Rock is composed, and it is of various degrees of hardness that at the top of the formation being the softest. The color is generally a dull gray sometimes varying to yellow and in a few instances is white.

This morning one of the provision waggons being emptied started back for Fort Leavenworth. The dust was very troublesome to-day and seems to increase as we go further West. We encamped on the bank of a small stream at a short distance from the river, and there being no timber we were for the first time obliged to use the "bois de vache."[4]

June 5. This morning was cloudy, and we hoped to have a little rain to lay the dust. But towards noon it cleared, and a high wind sprung up making the dust almost unbearable. About seven miles from camp the bluffs between the forks begin and the country from this point is still more sandy and barren than it was before; there was scarcely any vegetation on the hills but buffalo grass and that was parched by the Sun. In the river bottom however we found a camp where there was very good grass for our horses.

The distance to-day was 21 miles, and the direction varied from 10° N of W to 10° S of W.

On the 6th of June we proceeded 11 miles along the right bank of the river, and then crossed it. This required about an hour, and every thing even the sheep arrived safe.

We saw plenty of buffalo to-day, but being well supplied with meat did not kill any. The marly sandstone again outcrops on the N side of the river. On the South side, the hills have a gentle slope to the river, affording good pasturage for the buffalo later in the season. The distance to-day was 20 miles, and the direction for 11 miles 15° S of W, for the other 9 miles 25° S or W.

June 7. This morning after travelling 9 miles along the left bank of the river we struck for the North fork, which is about 15 miles from the South fork at this point. We travelled the required distance over a most miserable country, our direction being NW, but only found ourselves at the top of the bluffs which we could not descend at this place. Keeping along the brow of the hill for about two miles, we reached Ash Creek, and after descending into its valley with some difficulty, we kept along it to its mouth and there encamped. The bed of the stream was perfectly dry

except for a few hundred yards from its mouth where a very pure spring gushed from the ground. A drink from this was very refreshing as we had been for nearly seven hours without any water. The bed of the stream is lined with ash trees along the whole distance, and where we struck it was surrounded by hills formed of the everlasting marly sandstone, which hills become perpendicular bluffs at its mouth. It was said by some of the men that they had seen a grizzly bear here, but it was much more likely a buffalo which had scared them.

We found at this place the remains of a large Sioux camp; they had left a red blanket almost cut to pieces with a knife, this was an offering to the Great Spirit, and was cut in order to show that it was entirely given to him; had they left it whole it would probably have been stolen by some other Indians, who would now respect it, as it could be of no use to them.

The distance to-day was about 33 miles.

The next morning (June 8) was clear and without wind, but towards noon it clouded up, and in the evening it blew a perfect hurricane. We were all sorry to leave our pleasant little valley for the bleak bluffs we could see along the river, and we knew that we now bid farewell to all timber for some time to come. The bluffs are composed of the same marly sandstone, and in some instances present the appearance of immense fortifications.

Just as we started we thought we saw the tops of the waggons of the Oregon emigrants on the bluffs, they had been there all night it was supposed and excited a great deal of pity in the camp, but when we changed our position with respect to them it was discovered that they were merely rocks which had looked so forlorn, and the benevolent ones were laughed at.

We travelled along the river bottom to-day, and the soil was so sandy that it was very hard pulling for the mules, so that we were twice obliged to make a very short march of 17 miles. On the opposite side of the river, the country was undulating but still very barren. We reached our camp about 2 o'clock and we again made use of the "bois de vache" for fuel.

One old buffalo bull was killed to-day but he was too old and tough for food.

June 9. This was a cloudy morning with a little rain about 12, and at 3 it commenced raining briskly. The general features of the country for about 7 miles were the same as throughout yesterday's march, but at this point the bluffs become lower, and finally both sides of the river have the undulating appearance which was before confined to the left bank.

About 2 o'clock we met a party of voyageurs from Fort Laramie, consisting of about half a dozen whites and half breeds. They set out from Laramie for St. Louis but had now been out fifteen days and had only arrived at this place which they said was 99 miles from the Fort. They informed us that there was a village of Sioux about ten miles NW of us consisting of about 200 lodges, whom they would bring over to see us, so we encamped here. There was one tall fine looking half breed among

them who was delighted to see us, speaking of our arrival he said "they (the Sioux) told me I lied when last winter I said you were coming" and the anticipation of showing the Indians that he had told the truth, pleased him mightily. Our course during the day was about 12° N of W and the distance 19 miles.

June 10. From camp this morning we could see far ahead of us the Chimney Rock, almost the only landmark on the whole river, to its left appeared the Courthouse; they were both too far distant to be seen with any distinctness, but the first view of the chimney showed us that it well deserved its name, for it appeared very much like the chimney of one of the large factories in the Eastern cities, more so indeed than it does on a nearer view. We encamped just opposite the Court House which is a large detached mass of rock, composed of sandstone and marl, and from the distance at which we viewed it appeared like an immense building, on the top there is a protuberance which looks something like a House, but it requires a brilliant imagination to make it realize the description we had heard of it, which furnishes it with everything requisite for a beautiful building. There is an appearance of vegetation near the top, but it is very scant. It has evidently been a part of the bluffs which we saw lower down the river, and by some means has become detached from them. It is about six miles from the river, and near it are the bluffs to which it originally belonged.

We intended this morning to march 25 miles to-day but after travelling 18 we reached the edge of a burnt prairie which extended for some distance up the river and not knowing how far up it might go we encamped on its border. About 5 miles from camp we crossed Smith's Fork, and 12 miles further Dry or L'Orels creek, now not dry, but very shallow.

The direction to-day was N. 60° W. During the day's march the left bank of the river was lined with cliffs like those we found on the right bank when we first struck it.

June 11. The valley during to-day's march was about 8 miles wide, bounded on each side by the high, marly cliffs. About 14 miles from camp, we passed the Chimney Rock, which was about 4 miles to our left. Some of us rode up to it. The distances are very deceptive in this country, and although this rock did not appear to be more than a mile distant when we started toward it, it was a good hours ride to it. I did not have time or instruments to measure its height, but we judged that it must be at least 500 feet above the level of the river now, although it has been worn down a good deal. The lower part of the rock is formed of the detritus of the upper part, and is an immense cone, but cut up by deep ravines which extend to the base of the shaft. The shaft is 100 ft high, and its cross section at the base about 20 feet by 8 or 10. It is split from the top nearly to the bottom, and probably this winter one part of it will fall. The rain acts on it very severely, and its existence is a proof that it seldom rains in this region, for any continuous rain would soon disintegrate the stone and wash it away. Here the bluffs begin to approach the river and where we camp are 2 miles from it.

Just opposite our camp was a Sioux village containing about 30 lodges. Mr. Fitzpatrick[5] who understood their language slightly went over to them, and by dint of much persuasion some of the men accompanied him back. They were soon convinced that we intended them no harm, and at last all the men, women, and children of the village came over. The women had great difficulty in scrambling up the bank of the river, and it would have been a fine opportunity for the Indian beaux of whom there were several to have shown their gallentry in assisting them, but they looked on without moving laughing heartily at the awkward riding of their ladies.[6] These latter staid by themselves while the men held a short talk with the Colonel. We gave them some tobacco, and they were afterwards taken through the camp, expressing the greatest admiration for the horses, and any one of them would have given all he had for one of them. In return for our tobacco they gave us some dried buffalo meat, and wanted some of our flour and coffee but we were too poor, and sent them off with nothing but the tobacco. Our direction to-day was N 55° W and the distance marched 24 miles.

June 12. To-day we made an early start as we have a long march to make. The bluffs which have hitherto run nearly parallel to the river, strike it about 15 miles from our camp, and it was necessary for us to find a low point on these and cross them. We were to strike the river again about 30 miles higher up. About 2 miles from camp we left the river, and directed our course towards the bluffs which we reached after travelling fifteen miles; the road ascends continually, and by the time we had arrived at the top I judged we were 500 feet above the level of the river. Some stunted pine trees grew on the sides of the bluff, and these in the distance looked like sentinels set to watch these immense forts. At the point where we left the river the rock bore a great resemblance to the representations of Stirling Castle.

A small stream rises where we cross the bluffs, and Mr. Fitzpatrick went forward in the morning to dam this up, to give water to the horses. We arrived there about noon and both men and horses found the water thus prepared for them very acceptable.

Here we had our first view of the Rocky Mts. Laramie Peak was visible in the distant West, and we could see the Black hills stretching from it in both directions. This was seventy miles distant from us, showing to what an immense distance the clear, dry atmosphere of this region enables us to see. It was a very warm day, and on all sides of us as far as the eye could reach, we saw the boundless, barren prairies sweltering in the Sun; except just where we were not a tree was to be seen, and I think it was the most grand and desolate view I ever beheld.

The descent was gradual over the marly sand, and after marching about 12 miles, we encamped on Horse Creek, a small stream which rises in the Black Hills 100 miles West of this.

The bluffs we had just crossed are called Scott's bluffs and take their name from a man, who whilst sick had been treacherously left by his

companions at the mouth of Horse Creek. This was in the fall, and the next spring the skeleton of a man was found on these bluffs. He must have crawled on his hands and knees from the Creek to the place where the skeleton was found, a distance of 12 miles at least.[7]

Our course for the first 17 miles to-day was 10° S of W for the other 12 nearly NW. On Horse Creek we found plenty of grass and a kind of reed called prêle by the French, of which the horses are very fond. We saw several antelopes to-day and I should have mentioned before, that ever since we struck the Platte these animals have been plenty, indeed so numerous were they that they ceased to be objects of curiosity. They are very inquisitive animals and often fell victims to their curiosity. When they were not within rifle shot at first, the hunter concealed himself and fastening a handkerchief on the end of his ramrod waved it about until it attracted the antelope's attention. As soon as he saw it he began to move up cautiously wondering what it can be, and as soon as he has come close enough the handkerchief is brought down, and the poor antelope very seldom escapes. This plan scarcely ever fails.

June 13. To-day we travelled 24 miles. Our direction for the first 12 miles was NW. We then struck the Platte again, and the direction for the remainder of the distance was 30° N of W.

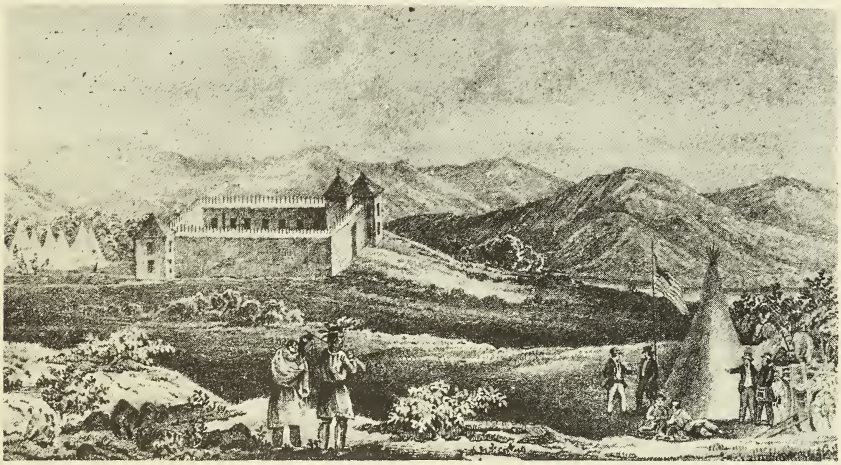
Far on our left were the high bluffs of sandstone perfectly barren, and on the right hills of gravel or sand, covered with a stunted or parched growth of grass. The river is lined with Cottonwood timber from where we struck it, and may be said to be slightly timbered from this point to the Sweetwater where we left it.

We found a scant supply of grass in one of the bottoms to-night, but consoled ourselves with the expectation of getting to Laramie to-morrow. Every one looked forward to our arrival there as the end of all our troubles, we supposed that the voyageurs would have plenty of good horses, and that we could buy them for almost nothing, but we were undeceived before we left them.

June 14. This morning Lt. Turner and Mr. Fitzpatrick went ahead to find a good camp in the vicinity of Laramie. The command started at the usual time, and after a very rough journey of 8 miles arrived at the Fort. There are two of these posts here, one called Fort Laramie, and the other Fort Platte. Fort L. belongs to the American Fur Co. and does much the largest business of the two. Fort Platte belongs to a firm in St. Louis and was deserted by the occupants about the middle of July for another Fort which was to be built about 8 miles further down the Platte.

All these forts are built alike. A hollow square is formed by the rooms of the fort, which are used for storing skins, Indian goods, & c, and as residences for the voyageurs. The outside wall of these rooms contains no windows, all the light and air being admitted from the enclosure. The roof is nearly flat, formed of cottonwood poles, and the rooms are ceiled generally with tanned buffalo skins. They are built of unburnt brick, baked in the Sun; the walls are very thick and consequently the

temperature within the fort is much more uniform than it is outside. They are the most comfortable buildings that could possible be constructed in this region, and are almost inaccessible to Indians, as they have but one entrance which can always be secured in case of an alarm.



Fort Laramie, 1842. National Archives.

The roofs of the rooms form the terre-plein[8] of the work, and the outer wall is higher than the roofs forming a parapet. Connected with the fort there is generally an enclosure commanded by it, into which the horses and mules are driven at night to secure them from the Indians, who however friendly they might be to the occupants of the fort would not be able to resist the temptation to carry them off were they left loose.

Fort Laramie has towers at two of the angles, but this was the only instance in which I observed them. They were intended to flank the faces of the work, and might be very useful.

We arrived at the mouth of Laramie fork about 10 o'clock, and seeing nothing of Mr. Fitzpatrick or Lt. Turner, went up the Platte in search of grass under the guidance of Mr. Bisonnette[9] the person in charge of Fort Platte. After travelling for three miles we came to a bottom which they had represented as containing very good grass, but we found very little there. There was no help for it though, and we were about to encamp when Mr. Fitzpatrick rode up and informed us that there was good grass on Laramie fork. This the employes had not told us of as they wished it for themselves. We immediately struck across the hills and in an hour more found ourselves encamped in a beautiful bottom on the Laramie with plenty of luxuriant grass. The Laramie is a beautiful stream about 30 yards wide, abounding in fish, well timbered and with plenty of grass on its banks. We were here for three days and were sorry enough when we were obliged to leave it.

The people of the fort had sent runners out to the Indian villages, and on the morning of the 16th (Monday) about 1200 Sioux counting men women and children, were assembled; they came in with great reluctance evidently distrusting us, but hoping to get some valuable presents from us, they overcame their fears enough to be present at the talk.

We came down to the fort about 9 o'clock and found them on the plain outside, some buffalo skins stretched on poles had made a kind of fence to shelter us from the wind and rain,[10] and the Colonel and the officers accompanying him having been seated in front of this, the warriors arranged themselves in front in parallel lines, the chiefs forming the first line, and the highest in rank in the center of the line: the old men were in the outermost line. They were all seated on their haunches and commenced smoking at a great rate.

The Colonel opened the council by making them a speech, telling them that he had come to open a road to Oregon, that this road must be left open by them and that they must not disturb those who passed over it. He advised them to spill all the whiskey brought into their villages by the traders and to drive away the people who brought it to them. He said that he had not come out for the purpose of making them presents, but in order to show them that their great father had not forgotten them he brought them a few things which would be given to them. The presents were then given to them and a division was immediately made by one of the eldest chiefs. They consisted of gunpowder, lead, blankets, red cloth, red paint knives & c.

After the presents were distributed, an old chief named Bull Tail[11] made a speech in answer to the Colonel's. He expressed himself very grateful for the presents, and promised in the name of his people that the whites should not be molested in their journies to Oregon. His speech was not a long one and they seemed to be much relieved when the council was over. They knew that they were guilty and could not divest themselves of the idea that the Dragoons had come to punish them for their robberies and murders. At the end of every sentence of the Colonel's speech they expressed their satisfaction by the sound ugh! ugh!, and the more general the satisfaction the louder was the ejaculation. When he told them he had not come to bring them presents there was very faint applause, but when he afterwards said that he had a few things for them, they were perfectly overpowered with delight, and ugh! ugh! resounded on every side.

After the council one of the howitzers was fired several times, the bursting of the shell astonished them very much, and they expressed great dread of the arm which could kill them twice as they supposed.

They were most of them very tall, fine looking Indians, but were very poor, some of them were hard drinkers when they could get whiskey, but there were others who never tasted a drop. Old Bull Tail was one of the latter class, and when we were on our return home we heard that during our absence he had emptied several barrels of whiskey that some of the Mexican traders had brought to his village.

The women were generally very ugly though we did not see many of them. They are the drudges of the camp, and in one case where we passed a family travelling, the women walked and drove the mules while the father of the family was mounted on a fine pony.

Some of the horses had become very poor, and the Colonel resolved to leave them here with Capt. Eustis'[12] company as a guard, this was done and the next morning we started for the South Pass which was said to be 300 miles from Fort Laramie. Capt. Eustis and Lts Carlton and Ewell[13] were left in charge of the camp, which contained about 100 men. All of the waggons except six were left with this camp.

After going up the Laramie about half a mile we left it and struck across the hills, in the course of a mile or two we came into the Oregon road and 10 miles from Laramie found the warm spring; this is a large spring situated in the bed of a stream dry at this time, the temperature of the water is not much above that of the river.

The valley of the stream is faced by red sandstone, underlaid by silicious limestone. In this latter were some beautiful fossils, but the stone was so hard that none of them could be obtained. From this point this formation extends up the Platte as far as we went, and the river forcing its way through the rocks has formed the cañons which render the navigation so difficult and dangerous. We passed several of these in to-day's march. The red color of the sandstone gives them a peculiar appearance, different from any of the rocky scenery of the country. They seem more like the works of art than nature, and till we approach them, one can hardly realize that they are not brick walls.

The road ran over a comparatively smooth country, very barren, and the hills are generally composed of coarse gravel with large boulders, or of the marly sandstone that we found East of Laramie. We passed a little pine timber just West of the warm spring, and there was a little timber on the two creeks we passed afterwards, one 18 miles from Laramie and the other 23 miles. On neither of these did we find any grass, and we were obliged to go to Horse Shoe Creek 34 miles from where we started in the morning. Here was excellent grass and a fine stream of pure water. About sundown we had a thunder storm, the first since we were on the main Platte.

June 18. This morning we started about 8 o'clock, having to wait until that time for the tents to dry. Here we left the Oregon road and for the first 7 miles the country has very much the appearance of that we passed over yesterday; we then struck the river and after going up the right bank 8 miles crossed it. The country on the South side of the river began to be mountainous and it was on this account that we crossed it. We travelled four miles further, and then camped though the grass was not very good. Fortunately we had stopped at noon for an hour and a half where there was very good grass and the horses did not feel the want of pasture much.

The red sandstone formation did not appear on the river during to-days march, though we could see that it colored parts of the Black Hills which were to our South. Our old friend the marly sandstone was again our companion.

The river has changed its character entirely, it is deeper, timbered, and has a gravelly or rocky bottom, characteristics entirely different from those it bore below Scotts bluffs.

About sundown a squaw and two children came into camp. She belonged to the Arapaho nation, and had married a Crow Indian. The party to which her husband belonged had been attacked by the Sioux, all the men were killed and the women and children taken prisoners. She being Arapaho with whom the Sioux were at peace was set at liberty with the two children one of whom was her daughter and the other her nephew. They had left the Sioux with a very scant supply of provisions, and a dog which they used as a pack-animal. They soon exhausted their provisions, and had that morning killed the dog; and had they not met us in the evening would have been very near starving in a few days. We gave them as much beef and bread as it was supposed they could eat, but when they had finished this, they fell upon the poor dog which they had roasted in the morning and devoured it. The next morning they were sent to Fort Laramie with an escort of two Dragoons, and we heard afterwards that they arrived there in safety.

June 19. This morning we left the river and travelled over a very rough path for about 8 miles when we again struck the river, just below this point are the mouths of two branches. We travelled about 6 miles further over a much smoother road, and attempted to cross, but the river was not fordable, finding a little grass about a mile further up we went that far and encamped. Just before reaching camp we crossed a hill composed almost entirely of botryoidal and mammillary iron ore, it was very heavy and judging from this fact must be very rich. Mr. Fitzpatrick showed me a piece of coal which he had picked up on a sand bar in the river, it had probably been washed from its bed by the water. The distance travelled today was 15 miles and the course NW.

This evening one of the men named Smith accidentally shot himself with his carbine in the arm, at first it was supposed that the wound was not serious, but it turned out that nearly all the lower part of the arm and the elbow joint had been shattered. It was amputated just above the elbow by Dr. De Camp,[14] and the next morning accompanied by the Doctor and six men the patient started back for Laramie. The poor fellow bore his loss without a murmur, and even stood another amputation afterwards without flinching.

Ever since we left Laramie the artemisia or wild sage had been very abundant, impeding our progress a great deal. In this region it is about a foot high has a very stiff brittle wood, and is almost as great an impediment to waggons as so many stones would be. On the Oregon trail it is worn down a great deal, rendering the travelling there much easier.

June 20. This morning we crossed the river, and travelled over a very smooth road (artemisia excepted) for about 5 miles where we struck a small creek, finding a little good grass here we stopped half an hour to refresh our horses they having not fared very well last night. Here we left

the river, and 8 1/2 miles further we crossed the Fourche a la bois or Woody Fork. Ten and a half miles further we came to Deer Creek and encamped near its mouth having struck the river 3 miles from Woody Fork.

Traces of iron were frequent during the first part of to-days march but grew scarce towards the end of it. The hills on the left approach the river, and those on the right recede and are not so precipitous.

About 10 miles from Deer Creek we came into the Oregon road, and kept it from this point to the pass. Our distance to-day was 25 miles, and the direction for the first 14 miles 10° W of N during the remainder of the march NW.

June 21. At Deer Creek we found very good grass and consequently did not start till later than usual. The country throughout to-days march is still very barren, and about 1 1/2 miles from the river are low hills with deep ravines running from their foot to the river, these made our progress very slow as they were difficult to cross. We did not arrive at camp until late and the distance was set down at 28 miles though I do not think it was so great. The direction was 10° S of W.

A grizzly bear was seen this afternoon, and several gave chase at once. They found him a very unruly customer, and did not catch him. One shot broke his fore shoulder, and made him perfectly frantic, so that he turned round and the chase was all the other way for a few minutes, he did not keep it up long however, and finally escaped by swimming the river and hiding in a thicket of plum bushes.

June 22. To-day we were to leave the Platte and strike for the Sweetwater. 1 1/2 miles from camp we crossed the river and gradually left it. In about 12 miles we reached the bitter spring where there was some good grass but very bad water. It was a very hot day and this water almost as nauseous as sea water was delicious to us. We stopped here a couple of hours, and then went to a spring 13 miles further, where we encamped.

For the first 12 miles the face of the country was comparatively smooth, that is there were no rocks. But during the last 13 miles I noted limestone of various degrees of hardness, and now and then a granite boulder. Some of the limestone has numerous impressions of shells in it. The distance to-day was 25 miles, and the direction for the first 12 miles, 10° S of W, for the remainder of the distance nearly SW.

We noticed many salt efflorescences during the day's march, accounting well for the bitterness of the water.

June 23. We made an early start this morning, and after a very hard journey of 25 miles reached the Sweetwater. The soil is impregnated with salt and is very sandy, it was a very hot day, and the heat and sand together made it one of the most disagreeable marches we had had. In the vicinity of the Sweetwater, we passed several beds of this salt; they had been lakes, but were now dry and resembled new fallen snow. We tasted some of the deposits and found it resembled Epsom or Glauber salts. Probably it was some compound of soda though none of us were chemists of sufficient

knowledge to tell which; some of it was brought home by one of the officers. The road passes Independence Rock just as we strike the river. This is a large detached mass of granite, and was named by some persons who celebrated the 4th of July here. The sides are covered by the names of emigrants and far above all were the names of Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay. These were put here by some Democrat and Whig, who far on their way to Oregon could not forget their political prejudices.[15] On the other side of the river the Sweetwater Mts approach and run nearly parallel to it for about 7 miles when they suddenly recede and we see them afterwards at a distance of about 20 miles from the river, and again nearly parallel to it. They are composed of granite frequently intersected by large dykes of trap, which are always accompanied by some vegetation on their tops, the surrounding granite being entirely bare, and worn smooth by the effect of the weather.

Independence Rock. National Archives.

The river is a beautiful little stream about 30 yds wide, with a fine gravelly bottom, and perfectly clear; the water is excellent, and we could well appreciate the beauty of its name after drinking the miserable water we had had for the last two days. Our course to-day was SW.

June 24. To-day we travelled 27 miles up the right bank of the river. The road was very sandy but well marked, the wild sage, which was present on all sides being beaten down and killed by the Oregon waggons of preceding years. We looked out to-day for the Mountain goat but none were seen.

About 3 miles from the end of our day's march, as we arrived at the top of a little hill, we had our first view of the Wind River Mts. Although still at a great distance from them we could distinguish their snow-capped summits, and it was pleasant to know that we could now see even further than the end of our long journey.

About 7 miles from Independence Rock we passed the Devils Gate, a very grand passage made by the river through the Sweetwater Mts. This

had been described by Capt. Fremont,[16] and I will only add that here the river seems entirely to leave the Mts which through the remainder of its course above, it has hugged closely. These Mts must be a spur of the Sweetwater Mts, and although they extend to nearly as great a distance are not so high. They are perfectly naked except in the immediate vicinity of the trap dykes where there is generally a scant vegetation.

Devil's Gate. National Archives.

The valley formed by these two ranges is about 20 miles wide, and just on the bank of the river there is a little good grass. The remainder of the valley is perfectly barren producing nothing but wild sage and prickly pear.

June 25. After travelling 9 miles this morning we stopped for about two hours, and left a camp containing 26 men and the horses which had become so sick or poor as to be unable to go to the Pass. We then entered a gorge of the Mts through which the river forces its way, and crossing it twice marched 11 miles to camp. In this gorge we saw a herd of Mountain goats but they were too wild for us, and none of them were shot. While we were at the sick camp two of the men brought in a pair of grizzly bear cubs, one was live, but they had been obliged to kill the other.

June 26. This morning after going two miles along the bank of the river, we left it to our right it making a bend to the North, we then travelled 18 miles further and struck it again where there was some very good grass. Here we stopped for about two hours, and then went 3 miles to camp. The bottom was dotted with buffalo when we arrived, but none were killed as we had taken several during the day. This was the finest grass we had seen, and there was so much of it that the Colonel determined to stay here another day, so we moved 3 1/2 miles further on the 27th and laid bye until the next morning.

Saturday 28th. This morning we crossed the river and leaving it to the left travelled 12 miles to a small branch where we made our noon halt. Three miles further we crossed a little stream, and three miles from that another, about 5 miles from the latter we again came to the Sweetwater, now quite a small stream; there was however a beautiful bottom and excellent grass. The river is lined with small willows, and in this camp strawberries were in blossom at this time, perhaps some of them were ripe.

June 29. To-day we crossed the river and left it to the right, and after travelling about 5 1/2 miles struck it again, we then went up it for about 1 1/2 miles and encamped; remaining there till 12 o'clock.

June 30. When we have but six miles to travel to our camp on the Pacific waters. We arrived there about 2 1/2 o'clock, and had much difficulty in finding a camp ground.[17]

There is a spring rising a short distance West of the dividing ridge, which flows into Sandy Creek one of the tributaries of Green River the Colorado of the West. The banks of the stream are boggy and we could not cross it with our horses without going further than we wished. To the NW appeared the Wind River Mts their snow capped summits towering high above us, now not more than 10 miles distant. On the E & W the country was gently undulating with now and then a high hill. All felt as though we were nearer home by weeks than we were a few days since, the object of our journey was accomplished, and when we turned our backs upon the Wind R. Mts, which had been viewing us for so many days it almost appeared as though Fort Leavenworth were in sight, although the longest and most tedious part of our journey was yet to come.

In our return trip to Laramie the only deviation we made from our former route was between the Sweetwater and the Platte. Instead of crossing directly over from Independence Rock we kept down the Sweetwater for a few miles and then crossed over to the Platte which we

reached in about 15 miles. We had been marching from the time we left the Sweetwater over high, barren plains producing nothing but prickly pear and artemisia, when suddenly we arrived at the brink of a hill about 800 feet high and one of the grandest views I ever beheld burst full upon us. Below us was the river seemingly a mere thread, surrounded on all sides by precipices even higher than the one on which we were; on the opposite side, the sides of the Mts were nearly vertical, and with their bright red color and smooth faces seemed the work of a race of giants, the genii of fortifications. Lower down, the river forced its way through a "cañon" which it had probably worn for itself through this wall, and for several miles it is a succession of rapids. The most striking characteristic of the scene was the red color of the rocks which gave the scenery an artifical appearance very seldom seen in any other formations. It was Sunday and the profound stillness reminded us forcibly of that day at home. Expressions of admiration burst from all in the command, and after stopping for a few minutes to admire, we commenced the descent. By keeping along a buffalo path we have very little difficulty in getting down, and in about half an hour we found ourselves on the bank of the river. After seeing this place it is very easy to account for the muddiness of the Platte water, for an immense deal of land must be washed from these rocks continually. Keeping along the bank for about a mile, we crossed the river just above the Hot Spring gate where there was a very good ford, and ascended the hill which formed the gate, again using a buffalo path to guide us. Just as we arrived at the top of the hill two buffalos rushed past us, descending on the other side with a sure footedness and swiftness wonderful for such unweildy animals. They looked fiercer and more dangerous than those we met on the plains, and some remarked that they were the demons of the Mts: certainly they looked the character.

The cliffs through which the river forces its way are red sandstone of various shades, and the hill that we crossed was formed partly of the sandstone and partly of gypsum. The low hills along the bank of the river were formed of gravel and large boulders, and lying in confused masses on the top of the cliffs were numerous pieces of coarse conglomerate with a very hard cement. I thought it bore a great resemblance to the Patomac marble of which the columns in the Halls of Congress are made.

After leaving the hill we crossed the river again, and marching about 10 miles further bivouacked in the river bottom with very little grass. The march to-day was estimated at 33 miles.

The next morning July 7 we crossed the river and marched to a well timbered little creek which Frémont has called Carson's Creek. It is about 3 miles from our last night's camp. There was very good grass here and our horses filled themselves well, and after their last night's fasting this was necessary for them, as we had a hard day's march before us.

To-day we were to cross the Red Buttes. Butte is the general name given by the trappers and other Western people to any prominent hill. The Red Buttes take their name from their color, being composed of the same red

sandstone which was so prevalent in yesterday's march. The Black Hills cross the Platte at this point, and it will be recollected that on our outward trip we left the river some miles below them to avoid the rough country we would have to cross had we kept along the river; it is utterly impossible to take the waggons over them.

We marched along the bank of the river on the steep side of the hills until about 11 o'clock, when we left the river which here makes a bend to the North. Striking across the hills for a few miles over as rough a country as we traversed yesterday, we finally came upon the river again almost in sight of our old camp ground two weeks before. Our waggons which had gone round by the old road came in sight about the same time, and crossing the river once more we encamped about a mile below our camp of June 21. The Colonel and one of the men were taken sick to-day. The Col. was able to ride, but the man was so sick and weak that he was carried in a litter made by placing poles through the stirrups of two horses one in rear of the other, and tieing blankets over the poles. In this way he was brought into camp arriving there about sundown. It was rather a rough conveyance over such a country, but there was no other way of carrying him.

In consequence of the sickness we remained at this place until the 9th, and then starting for Laramie arrived there on the 13th.[18]

From the Pass as far back even as Fort Laramie the road had been enlivened by our daily meetings with the emigrants, they were still in good spirits, and entrusted us with letters to their friends, the last these friends would hear of them probably for many years. Very few of these persons looked forward to staying in Oregon, but expected if they did not find very good land there, to push on to California, hoping as they said, that Uncle Sam would do something for them there one of these days.[19]

Generally, when the head of the column passed, they were all in a good humor but those in the rear found the women all crying and the men looking very sad. Poor people! they felt that in passing us they broke the last link that bound them to the United States.

At Laramie we found everything just as we could have wished. Our poor horses had become fat, the man who lost his arm had entirely recovered, and the squaw and her children had become domesticated in the camp living very comfortably, and did not seem at all anxious to find her tribe. She had not been able to restrain her propensity for eating dogs, and a very fat one having been shot by one of the Officers it was given to her, and while she had this, she would touch nothing else. We saw too, our friend and ally Old Bulltail who came into camp to tell us that he had spilt the whiskey of the traders who came to his village to sell it.[20]

All the waggons that could be dispensed with, and all the worst mules and poorest horses were sent back to Fort Leavenworth, and having rid ourselves of all encumbrances except the squaw and children, the next day we moved up the Laramie, and after a short march of eight miles encamped.

We were now "en route" for Bent's Fort, but instead of travelling by the usual road, we were to keep up the Laramie for about fifteen miles, then go up the Chugwater a branch of the Laramie, and afterwards striking the South Fork of the Platte to go by the road from St. Vrain's to Bent's.

The other route was more to the East, and on account of the dryness of the season, it was supposed that we would not be likely to find water upon it. There was a small village of Cheyennes to be found at the head of the Chugwater, and as the Colonel was anxious to see as many Indians as possible, it was determined to take this route.

The grass on the Laramie was so good that we were unwilling to leave it, but the next day (July 15) after travelling 4 miles further on it, we struck across to the Chugwater which we reached one mile further. Our direction for the five miles was SW. We marched 19 miles further along the bank of the creek the direction being now nearly S.

The formation along the Chugwater is precisely that of the North Fork of the Platte. On the East side of the valley which is about 2 miles wide rise perpendicular cliffs of marl presenting the same appearance as those in the vicinity of Scotts Bluffs, and the Chimney Rock. In fact just above our camp was a detached rock which will soon be as great a curiosity as the chimney. The shaft is now thicker than that of the C, but every year it becomes thinner. On the West side the bluffs are not so bold, and seem to have been more weather beaten than those on the East side. The stream is slightly timbered with cottonwood. The creek is said to have taken its name from a fall that a Yankee had, in telling of his mishap afterwards he said that he had fallen chug into the water, and the term pleased the trappers so much, and seemed so expressive to them that ever since it has gone by that name. This was told me by Mr. Fitzpatrick, but he did not vouch for the veracity of the story.

We were accompanied by a Cheyenne Chief called Old Soldier, he was very anxious to come to the States to see how the Eastern Indians lived. He was convinced that something must be done by the Western Indians, as the buffalo were getting scarce, and unless they found some other way of living they must starve. He was the only Indian whom I ever heard say anything on the subject, and we were sorry he could not come with us, perhaps it would have done a great deal of good.

July 16. The next morning we reached the Cheyenne village about 7 miles from our camp. It was a small village containing I think less than 30 lodges, all the men were of the same family, descended from one old man whom we saw at the village, but he was so dried up and shrivelled that he looked like a mummy. These Indians seemed to be very well off, they had iron pots for boiling their meat in, and a very good supply of ladles and kettles, the ladles are made of the horn of the Mountain goat, and are curiosities.

We had a talk and a smoke with them, made them a few presents, and in about half an hour, left them perfectly delighted with us. We travelled 1 mile more on the creek, and then left it to go to Horse creek, one branch of

which we reached in about 10 miles. Finding no grass here, we went to the next branch about 5 miles further making our day's march about 23 miles. Here we found a little grass and plenty of currants which are very good. They are of a yellow color much larger and I think much better than those cultivated in the States. About 5 o'clock we had a little rain, but not enough to do us any good. The appearance of the country is very much the same as that between the North and South forks of the Platte. We found but very little timber on either branch of Horse Creek. Our direction to-day for the first 8 miles was a little W of S, for the remainder of the march 10° E of S.

July 17. About 5 1/2 miles from camp we found a small spring where we watered, and 1 1/2 miles further the main branch of Horse Creek. There was another spring too a short distance S of Horse creek. 12 miles from H. Creek we found the bed of a stream, but it was perfectly dry, and in the course of a mile or two we were again disappointed by another. This frightened us a little as the horses were very thirsty, so we turned our course more to the East until it became SE, and for the remainder of the day that was our direction. We found Pole Creek, after having marched 33 miles. Horse Creek is bordered with bluffs similar to Scotts bluffs but not as high. Pole C is bordered in the same way but the bluffs are still lower than those on Horse C. The country between these two creeks is better than any we had seen since we left Laramie; there is a little grass though very little, and the ground is gently undulating. If it rained here this would probably be a very fertile country. We saw two wild horses to-day, they stopped to gaze at us a while, and then throwing up their manes and tails were off at a great rate. They were too far off for us to distinguish their color or appearance. Two of our hunters who were sent out this morning did not return to-night, they missed us as we had changed our course without their knowledge; they returned however the next morning. Rockets were sent up as signals during the night, and in the morning howitzers were fired but it did no good, and the men came in without hearing any of the signals.[21]

July 18. This morning we started to go to Crow Creek, which takes its name from the number of these birds which are seen upon it sometimes. After marching 16 miles we found it though without any water in it. The direction was about 10° E of S. About 3 miles from camp we came to a little spring, for the remaining 13 the course was over a high level plain perfectly barren. Finding good grass where we struck the creek, we remained here the rest of the day. By digging in the sand which formed the bottom of the creek we soon came to very good water.

We had our first view of the Mts. to-day, they were indistinct it is true but we could see the dim outline of Longs peak in the distance, and on each side of it lower ranges of mountains. To our East apparently about 30 miles from us was a range of bluffs bearing a close resemblance to Scotts bluffs.[22]

July 19. We crossed the creek this morning and left it to our left, cutting off a bend. It was in sight however nearly all day, and we were

unwilling to trust ourselves very far from water now after our thirsty days march of the 17th. About 15 miles from camp we found a little stream containing very good water, and below the mouth of this Crow Creek is thinly timbered. 12 miles further we encamped, but had to dig for water again. The country was undulating, now and then sandstone outcrops, and oxide of iron was found, some of it very rich. The hills are generally composed of gravel. The soil is marly and cracked to some depth from the heat and dryness of the season. The snow on the Mts begins to be distinctly visible. Longs peak to-day bore about SW at the end of the march. The distance was 26 miles and the course E of S.

July 20. To-day our course was for 13 miles S 30° W, and for the remainder of the distance SW, the whole distance was 27 miles. We turned off from Crow Creek about 11 miles from our mornings camp, and struck the Cache creek near its mouth. The soil became more and more sandy as we approached the Platte, until on the river it is nearly all sand, producing a long rank grass not near as good for our animals as the short blue grass we had had before.

We had approached still nearer the Mts during to-days march. After marching 5 miles up the river we crossed and encamped in a bottom with a luxurious growth of this rank grass.

This river is very much like its sister stream the North fork. It is about as large and has a sandy bottom, but the valley of the river is far more beautiful. There is a very large growth of Cottonwood upon it, and growing upon its banks we recognized several plants which had been familiar to us at home. A variety of the lupin was just in blossom, we saw too, a species of locust tree, the elder bush, and the rosin plant began to make its appearance, everything showing that we were getting into a more genial climate than we had yet experienced.

July 21. Our march to-day was along the Platte which here runs nearly N, the distance was 27 miles and the direction of course nearly S. We very soon struck a road which had been made by the waggons from Bents Fort, and followed this road with but little deviation from it until we reached the Fort.

About 6 miles from camp we passed St. Vrain's Fort and 6 miles further another old one of the Bent's. A few miles brought us to Luptons Fort and we passed two others during the day. These are all deserted now, the trade having become too small to support them, though we were told by Maj St. Vrain[23] that they intended trading here this winter again. All of the forts are built like Fort Laramie except that they generally have no bastions at the angles. St V's and Lupton's forts are both larger than Fort Laramie.

To-day Pike's peak was first seen, at a great distance from us and bearing directly ahead.

The river throughout to-day's march was generally 2 or 3 miles to our right, though we struck it several times during the day.

We encamped in a well timbered bottom, with plenty of grass such as it was, and about 5 o'clock had a tremendous thunder shower, the first thunder we had heard since we were on the main Platte.

July 22. This morning we made a late start as we were obliged to dry the tents. Another small fort was passed and at the distance of eight miles from camp we commenced leaving the river for Cherry C. This carried us a little more to the Southward making our general course for the day a Little W of S. A little branch empty's into the river about 12 miles from camp. Its course was NW & SE. Cherry Creek empty's about 15 miles from camp. We reached the creek, in about 14 miles making the days march about 22 miles.

Cherry C. is a creek in every respect except water which in other parts of the world is considered a sine qua non. It had fine grass fine timber (cottonwood) but no water at this time. We found some by digging and by crossing the creek found a spring of excellent water. The divide between the river and creek is sandy and barren like all other parts of this country, about the centre of it we crossed the dry bed of a stream, which looked as if there had never been water there. The valley of Cherry C. is very wide where we struck it, if indeed it may be called a valley, the left bank having a very gradual ascent for a great distance.

July 23. The direction of to-day was about SE and the distance 22 miles. The valley of the creek gradually narrows until about 13 miles from camp it is no more than two miles in width. The hills which become bolder are not high, and what was a very pleasant sight to us their tops begin to be covered with pine timber, reminding us in some degree of our Eastern forests. The soil of this valley is somewhat better than any we have yet seen, though it is still marly.

July 24. We continued our course up Cherry C. 4 miles, the direction being nearly South. Here is the junction of two branches, and we kept up the left hand branch for about 3 1/2 miles further, the direction now to the East. We passed through a grove of pine trees, which seemed to run nearly E & W perhaps a little N of E. Fourteen miles further we struck the Bijou C. a small branch of the Platte, surrounded on all sides by hills with pine groves on their tops. There was a fine growth of grass in the valley. To this point our direction was still more Easterly. We went two miles further to another stream which is I believe the Kioway and encamped. We had a fine grass to-night, and the timber which covered the hills around gave the camp an appearance of home which it had not borne before. The distance to-day was 22 miles.

There was no game to-day, though the grass is improving as we go South. The hills throughout to-day's march are composed of fine conglomerates and sandstone. Fine petrifactions and jasper were found at the point where we left Cherry C. This evening we had a little rain.

July 25. In the morning we commenced our march by entering the pine woods through which we passed for about 7 miles when we came to a little stream which probably runs into the Arkansas. Here we emerged from the woods and came out on the prairies again, which are here very green resembling much those in the East. The flora are new and beautiful evidently belonging to a more Southern latitude than any we have yet seen. Pikes Peak bore about West from us, and appeared to be not more

than 15 miles distant, though it must have been much further. The top was a perfectly bare mass of rock, and at this time was without snow, though in the course of the day we had a good deal of rain and the next morning the Mountain was covered with snow. Fifteen miles from camp we crossed a small stream, and 4 miles further another both of them probably running into the Arkansas. The point at which we struck the last Creek is called Jimmie's camp. We kept along this stream for a short distance and 10 miles more brought us to the Fontaine qui bouil, a small stream, well timbered with Cottonwood. We found some good grass here and encamped.

Pike's Peak. Library of Congress.

This stream rises at the foot of Pike's peak, in a spring which is said to be nearly pure soda water, though with what truth I do not know. It loses its properties before it reached our camp at any rate, for the next morning we tried and found it was good water but there was nothing peculiar in its taste. The valley of this river is about 7 miles wide, and could I think be made very fertile. There is plenty of rain, and the traders told us that they had scarcely ever crossed from the South fork of the Arkansas without having a storm of rain or snow. Around our camp this evening was a luxuriant growth of grass and weeds, much higher and more rank than any we have seen.

The distance to-day was 30 miles and the direction at first S afterwards SW.

The soil throughout to-days march was gravelly, jasper was found near the Fontaine qui bouil. Cacti were numerous as were also the wild sunflowers or resin plants, now in full blossom. During all the latter part of the day it was rainy.

July 26. To-day we travelled along the Fontain qui bouil 17 miles, the direction 10° E of S, and then turned our course for the Arkansas travelling SE, six miles brought us to the top of the hill forming the valley of the fontaine, and travelling 5 miles on the hill in a direction nearly E, we

came to the edge of the valley of the Arkansas, we then descended the hill and marching 5 miles further struck the river and encamped. To our right as we left the valley of the F qui B, was pine timber running along the bluff, the country between the two streams was very barren producing little grass, the soil was mixed with jasper of all colors. Just as we descended into the valley of the Arkansas we found numerous conical hills varying in height from 6 ft to 30 ft their sides and bases were covered with small pieces of jasper a little larger than a gun flint. Their form was that of a right cone with circular base. How these could have been formed it is impossible to say, they are regular enough to have been artificial, but from their great numbers, and the different sizes it would be difficult to say what their use was.

They may originally have been large rocks of this rough jasper which gradually split off by the action of the frost has fallen down regularly around the original rock until the cones have been formed. This supposition would account too for the conical form, as the tops would continue to be acted upon by the frost while the bottoms were protected by the debris.

The Arkansas where we struck it is a very pretty stream, about 100 yds wide, very crooked, very muddy and well timbered. The valley of the river is barren except in the immediate vicinity of the stream, where there is now and then a good growth of grass. There was a little rain to-night just as we arrived at camp.

July 27. To-day we travelled along the bank of the river; for the first 9 1/2 miles the direction was nearly East, for the remainder of the distance (12 1/2 miles) a little S of E. We encamped in a little bottom with not very good grass.

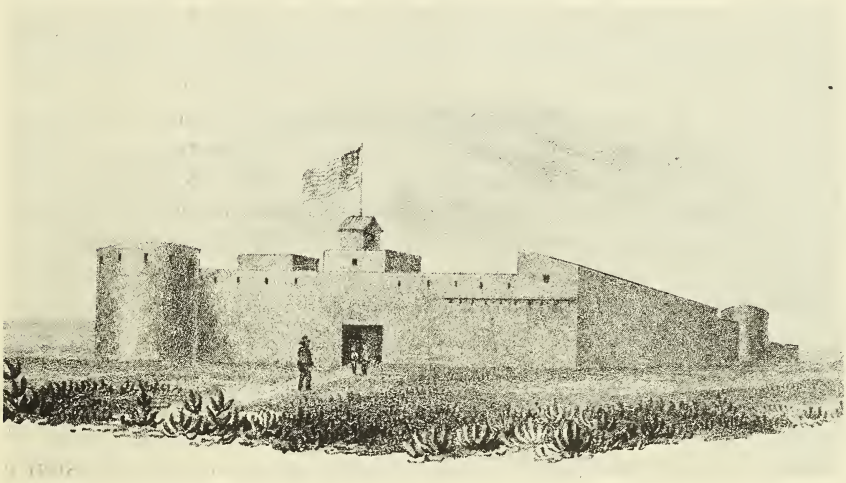
Fremontia was very plentiful in several varieties along the bottom, many black tailed rabbits live among these shrubs, and several of them were killed, they are larger than our Eastern rabbits, and their black tails give them a very curious appearance running about among the grass. A splendid variety of cactus was found on the Fontaine qui bouil and in to-days march it was very plentiful; the soil of the valley is a mixture of sand and clay, almost marly but very dry.

Three and a half miles from our morning's camp we crossed Dry fork, now full of water; this I think the stream on which Jimmie's camp is situated. Twelve and a half miles further we crossed another fork not perfectly dry. The sky was cloudy in the afternoon and towards evening we had a little rain.

July 28. We travelled in the river bottom for 13 miles, then the hills approaching the river, the road led over these hills for 6 miles leaving the river about two miles to the right. We encamped two miles from where we again struck the river making our day's march about 21 miles. For the first six miles the direction was a little S of E, for the remainder of the distance a little N or E. The soil of the bottom improves as we go East being now much better than any we have seen before. It is still very dry.

July 29. Tuesday. We were now but 16 miles from Bents Fort, and starting at the usual time arrived there at 12 o'clock.[24] Sandstone outcropped about six miles from camp being the first rock we had seen on the river.

On our approach to the Fort the national flag was displayed, and we received a salute of two guns from their little field piece. We found the two Messrs St Vrain[25] & George Bent[26] ready to welcome us, and heard the good news that the provisions which had been sent out there some two years before were in an excellent state of preservation.[27]



Bent's Fort. Library of Congress.

This is a larger and more commodious fort than any we have yet seen. It is built like the others of unburnt brick, but they had many of the comforts and a few of the luxuries of civilized life about them. Some of us took dinner at the Fort, and discovered that people can live as well in the Mountains as they can in the States. No vegetables are raised here, on account of the dryness of the climate, and they would be liable to be destroyed by the Indians, who out of mere mischief would take delight in rooting up anything that was planted. I do not think the experiment has ever been tried but from what we heard of the climate we judged it impossible.

We remained at the Fort long enough to load our waggons with provisions, and the next morning bidding farewell to our hospitable entertainers, started on our journey home where we expected to be in 24 days.

July 30. To-day we made a short march of 19 miles. Ten miles from camp we left the river for about 7 miles and camped 2 miles from where we again struck it. On the 31st we marched 8 miles to a large Cottonwood grove and staid there all day, at this point the Big Timber commenced. This is the name given to a part of the river about 25 miles in length, which is well lined with a large growth of Cotton wood.

Aug. 1. This morning we started on a course a little S of E, and after travelling 17 miles encamped; there was nothing new or interesting in the valley of the river. The river widens considerably, becoming about 1/4 of a mile wide, but is much shallower and muddier than it was where we first struck it. The hills which form the border of the valley become lower, and consequently the valley less marked, the bottoms are broader and the grass better.

Aug. 2. To-day we travelled 27 miles having to cross a place about 15 miles long called the Salt Bottom, a salty marsh, with but little grass, and very low.

We met some trappers to-day who gave us the news of Gen Jackson's death,[28] and that the annexation of Texas had entirely failed. This was a romance of their own.

On the 3rd we marched 19 miles. On the opposite side of the river Sand hills began to appear; a few buffalo were seen during the day, and one was killed. At intervals there is a little timber along the river, but as a general thing from the Big Timber down as far as we went, it may be said to be very badly timbered.

Aug 4. To-day we marched 22 miles. Just after we arrived at camp an express man came in from Bents Fort. He told us that Capt Frēmont had arrived at the fort, and brought with him a large mail that the Capt. had brought from the settlements for us. All were engaged for the remainder of the evening in reading the news which was as late as the last of June, and the lucky few who received letters were seen no more that morning.

Capt. F wrote to Mr. Fitzpatrick requesting him to go back to the Fort to accompany a party he wished to send to the Red River. As we were now on a broad waggon road which led directly to the settlements his services could be dispensed with, and much to our regret we separated from him the next morning. By his modest and gentlemanly bearing he had endeared himself to all the Officers of the command. He showed himself to be a perfect master of woodcraft and in his knowledge of the prairies I suppose cannot be equalled. In his responsible and difficult situation, (that of guide) he never failed to give universal satisfaction. His presence will be a great acquisition to any party that may go to any part of the Far West.[29]

Aug. 5. After bidding Mr. Fitzpatrick farewell this morning we started and passed Choteau's Island about 5 miles from camp, and marching 15 miles further encamped. The sandhills opposite become larger, but on our side of the river appearance of everything remains the same, causing the journey along this river to be the most monotonous we have yet made.

Aug 6. To-day we marched 23 miles, the direction being about the same as yesterday's. The buffalo was very plenty to-day, dotting both sides of the river for a great distance, several were killed, and the transition from living on lean beef to feasting on fat buffalo was very pleasant. Ninteen miles from camp we passed the Pawnee Forts. These are small heaps of stones which the Pawnees had thrown up for the purposes of defence.

They are situated on a sandstone bluff, and this I believe was the only rock "in citu" observed on the river, except that seen just West of Bents Fort.

Aug. 7. To-day our march was 19 miles, and from the first of August until this date inclusive our direction had been a little S of E. It was difficult on account of the windings of the river and consequently those of the road to determine the magnetic direction with any degree of accuracy, but the nightly observations for latitute showed that we had been going towards the South during that time. Thus we passed the crossing of the Arkansas about 9 miles from camp, here the road left the river for 8 miles, and two miles from where we again struck it, we encamped.

Aug 8. The distance to-day was 25 miles, and the direction for the first half of the march the same as yesterday's. We then turned a little to the North, and for the last half of the march, the course was 10° N of E. About 15 miles from morning camp the Santa Fe trace leaves the river, crossing the hills, and going by the Coon Creeks, which have become notorious in the annals of the Santa Fe trade for their bad water, and the numbers of buffalo seen in their vicinity. We did not follow the road, but kept along the river expecting to find better grass, and knowing that we should have better water. We encamped in a fine bottom to-night with good grass.

Aug. 9. Four miles from camp this morning we passed a large grove on the opposite side of the river called by Capt. Cooke, on his map, and in his journal Jackson's Grove. It was at this place that a party of Texians were disarmed in 1843. They were found here by Capt C. with no ostensible purpose, and as the Santa Fe caravans were in dangerous proximity, he thought it best to disarm them, leaving them firearms enough to support themselves by hunting on their way home. It was well that it was done, as it was their intention to attack the caravans as soon as the Dragoons had left them. The distance to-day was 25 miles and the direction NE.

Aug 10. During the first part of to-day's march the river bends to the South, and afterwards to the N again, it also becomes wider and deeper from what cause I do not know, except that perhaps the ground is more easily washed here than it was above.

On the South side of the river the country seems to be very barren, composed almost entirely of sand hills with a few stunted trees scattered among them, along the bank are found wild plums, and in the bottoms feeding on the grass were seen a great many buffalo. To night was our last camp on the river, although it would be in sight for a few days more. The direction to-day was N 30° E and the distance 20 miles.

Aug 11. To-day we travelled 6 1/2 miles in a direction a little E of N, and crossed Coon creek, which has been running parallel to the river at a distance of 6 miles from it for the last 15 miles, it is a little stream about 20 feet wide with a very swift current. It is not timbered. We then left the river entirely travelling in a direction a little W of N and in seven miles struck a little branch of Pawnee Fork. Here we again struck the Santa Fe trace, and following it for four miles crossed the Pawnee Fork. This stream is about the size of the Coon Creek but it is timbered. It is bordered on the N side by a range of ferringinous sandstone, slates, and marl, and from the

washings of these the water has a great resemblance in color and taste to that of the Platte. Six miles further we crossed Ash Creek, and encamped two miles from this on the creek.

All these creeks except Coon Creek have very high and steep banks and in wet weather are very difficult to cross. The only way is to wait until the water has fallen or, run the risk of drowning both men and horses. Fortunately for us there had been no rain lately or we would have had a great deal of trouble and delay.

Aug 12. To-day we travelled 20 miles, the direction about 30° N of E. It was raining all day, a very fortunate circumstance for us, as the whole of to-day's march was without water. About 3 1/2 miles from camp we passed Pawnee Rock some distance to our left, said to be a battle ground for these Indians. It is a large mass at the end of a ridge, and is probably limestone, though we were not near enough to tell with certainty. Sixteen and a half miles more brought us to Walnut creek, which instead of finding swollen by the rains as we had expected, was flowing gently enough, and we crossed it without any difficulty. Here we encamped and as there were plenty of catfish in the creek we fared sumptuously that night.

Aug 13. To-day the distance was 24 miles. Our course for 14 miles was a little S of E for the remainder of the distance 10° N.of E. About 7 miles from camp we struck the Arkansas, but left it almost immediately, 7 miles further we passed the Plum Buttes. These are high sand hills, and being the only hills in this part of the world are great landmarks for the Santa Fe traders. Their sides are covered with plum bushes but we could find no plums on them. They can be seen for 20 miles. Ten miles further we struck Cow Creek and encamped. To-day we had our last look at the buffalo. About 9 o'clock a very large herd was discovered 2 miles to our left. It was said to contain about 2000 head. The hunters immediately gave chase and in the course of the day eight or ten fat cows were killed. We saw no more after this, and certainly they had cause to congratulate themselves on our departure, for we had been living on them now, almost ever since we left Bent's fort. Cow Creek is a small stream with steep banks and well timbered.

Aug. 14. To-day we travelled 19 miles in a direction a little S of W. We crossed several small streams during the day, branches of Cow creek, and of the Little Arkansas. This last is the name of the stream on which we encamped, and although it has a long name it is a very insignificant stream, being no larger than the Pawnee fork.

The little Arkansas has high banks like all the timbered streams, and generally those that have low banks are not timbered. The reason of this is, I suppose, that the fires reach to the water's edge in the case of the low banks while where a stream has high banks it is intercepted by these banks, and any timber that may be growing on the creek is saved. On the Arkansas there was much more timber on the South side than on the North. This was because the sandhills on the South side intercepted the

fires, whilst on the other side the fires had a clean sweep directly to the waters edge.

Aug 15. To-day we travelled 20 miles in a direction nearly NE, and encamped on Turkey Creek. There was no wood on this creek, and as we were out of the buffalo range there was no "bois de vache", so we had to carry our fuel from our last night's camp to this place. As it was very hot weather we did not require more than would be just sufficient to boil coffee, and this was easily carried in the waggons which were now getting rather light.

Aug 16. To-day we travelled 23 miles, in a direction for the first 10 miles S of E, and for the next 13, 10° N of E. We encamped on Cotton Wood fork which is a branch of the Neoshio R. It is a beautiful little stream well wooded, and with good grass on its borders. Here we first found musquitoes, not having been troubled with these pests of a camp life until this time.

Aug 17. To-day we travelled 27 miles, our direction being nearly NE. About 15 miles from camp we came to Lost Spring, a fine large spring of excellent water but without timber. The day was so excessively hot, that we were obliged to stay here until about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when we again started, and going 12 miles further encamped on a little stream, probably a branch of Council Grove creek, the main head water of the Neoshio.

Aug. 18. To-day we moved 3 miles to Diamond Spring where we laid bye all day.

We had now arrived at the limestone country, which extends from some distance West of this, East as far as Fort Leavenworth, how far to the East of that point I do not know.

The country of course is much more beautiful than any we had yet seen, there was more timber on the banks of the streams and the streams themselves are much more numerous; springs became plenty and everything presented a gay apperance. From this point until we arrived at Fort Leavenworth, we were at no time out of sight of timber, and but a few houses and barns were necessary to give the landscape the appearance of a well cultivated country.

Aug 19. To-day we marched 23 miles. The direction nearly NE. Eight and a half miles from camp we passed Wood creek, 7 miles further we crossed Council Grove creek. This is well timbered for about 1/4 of a mile on each side of it, with oak, hickory, & c, and it is here that the Santa Fe traders generally get the timber to carry with them to mend their waggons. Two and a half miles from this we passed the Big John Spring, and 5 miles further we came to Pleasant Valley creek where we encamped. Here was the most delightful bathing I ever enjoyed.

We lost a couple of horses here by a very curious disease; early in the morning they commenced swelling in the sides and about the breast, the swelling increased wonderfully and by the time the command started they were not able to move. The traders had told us that they lost several horses

in the same way. The disease was probably caused by some weed which had sprung up, this having been a very wet season.

Aug 20. This morning Capt. Eustis' company started for Fort Scott. They were to go nearly East without any road, and with no guide but a pocket compass. We were sorry to part with them, but they were very glad to get off, as they would arrive at Fort Scott where the company was stationed much sooner by taking this route, than by going on to Fort Leavenworth.

The distance to-day was 20 miles and the direction of 10° N of E. Six and a half miles from camp we crossed Rock creek, 6 1/2 miles further Sleepy Horse creek, and at the intervals of 2 3/4 miles and 1 1/2 miles, other creeks scarcely worthy of names. On the last of these we encamped.

Aug 21. We crossed the creek at camp this morning, and in 6 1/2 miles crossed Rock. C., 1 1/2 miles further we crossed Beaver or Soldier C. and in 5 miles more Switzer's C. Eight miles from this we crossed another creek called "One Hundred and ten" by the traders being 110 miles from old Fort Osage. We encamped four miles from this on a small branch of the Kansas, leaving the road to our right to get to the camp. The general course throughout the day was a little N of E.

Aug 22. There was but little water during to-day's march, as we were almost midway between the headwaters of the Kansas and Osage Rivers. After travelling about 11 miles we found a little, and went 7 miles further to the head of a little stream which flows to the South. There was but little water and little grass here. One of the men had been sent forward to the Kansas to find out whether the river was fordable at a point much higher up than it was usually crossed, as by crossing it at the higher point we would save several miles from here to Fort Leavenworth, and thereby get to our journey's end in two days. The direction of to-day's march was a little N of E.

Aug 23. This morning the scout returned and reported that though the river was 12 feet deep, at the place it was expected to be fordable, still there was a ferry there and we would be able to get across to-day. The Indians who lived in the vicinity had told him that it was but 20 miles from there to the Fort. All were elated at this good news, and we were now confident that we would get to the Fort to-morrow, as the Indians would not shorten more than 10 miles we thought.

After travelling 4 miles we left the Santa Fe trace, and 4 miles further descended the highlands of the South side of the Kansas. Four miles from this we crossed the old Oregon road, and four miles further crossed a creek and the new Oregon trail at the same time. Two miles from here we struck the Kansas at the mouth of a small stream. This was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and about 12 o'clock at night every thing was crossed over in the boat.

The river was about 1000 feet wide and 12 feet deep, well timbered on both sides with oak, elm, hickory, cottonwood, & c, for the space of about 1/4 of a mile. There had been a great freshet in the spring, and the roots of

the trees were buried in the sand which had been washed down. The bottom had been completely spoiled by this sand and the trees seemingly growing through it presented a very desolate appearance.

Emerging from the timber on the opposite side we went for a mile and a half through a plain overgrown with weeds higher than a horse and rider, and finally encamped about 2 miles from the river on the hill which bounds the valley on the North. Near here was an Indian farm house, and as he had plenty of watermelons, canteloupes & c, we fared very sumptuously here.

The Shawnees live on the south side of the river and the Delawares on the North side. They have good farm-houses and their fields seemed to be very well cultivated, corn was the principal product, though they raised a great many melons, which they probably sold on the Missouri river. The land on both sides of the Kansas is excellent, and our route to-day has been more beautiful and interesting than any we have yet passed over.

Aug 24. Having procured a Shawnee guide, who said he knew the country well from the ferry to Fort Leavenworth we started this morning, with strong hopes of reaching the Fort by noon.

Eight miles from camp we crossed the Stranger R. a branch of the Kansas, and 5 miles further a small stream probably a branch of the Stranger. Soon after this we came in sight of the Missouri timber, and about 21 miles from our mornings camp we came into the military road leading from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Scott. We were now about 12 miles from Leavenworth, and all of the buildings of the Fort were in full view. The road was now familiar to nearly all and in three or four hours we arrived at the Fort.

A dragoon had been sent as an express yesterday but had come to the Fort in a different direction from ours. I forgot to mention that Lt. Smith[30] had been left at the camp on Pleasant Valley Creek with those horses which were thought too poor and weak to stand the journey in, and the Dragoon expressman had been sent to the Fort that the provision waggons might be ordered to meet Lt. Smith as soon as possible.

Our friends at the Fort thinking that we could come in by the same road the expressman did, rode out in that direction to meet us, so that we marched in almost by ourselves. They discovered their mistake very soon, and returning gave us a hearty welcome back to civilization once more.

The Colonel after making a short speech to the men congratulating them on the good fortune which had attended them during the whole march, and urging them to take good care of the animals which had served them so faithfully, dismissed the command, and the next morning started with his staff for St. Louis.

The map which accompanies this journal will tend to make it better understood. For the greater part of the map I am indebted to Capt. Frémont's, all of it being taken from his except a part of the route from St Vrain's Fort to Bents Fort, the route from Bents Fort to Fort Leavenworth and from Fort Leavenworth to the Platte R. The two former are taken

from my own observations, and the latter was taken from notes furnished me by Lt. Turner.

Very respectfully, yr obdt Servt
W.B. Franklin
Lt. Corps T. Engrs
attached to the expedition

NOTES

1. Colonel John J. Abert (1788-1863), chief of the Topographical Bureau 1829-1861 and Chief of the Corps of Topographical Engineers 1838-1861.
2. Simpson was the son of Dr. Robert Simpson, a Surgeon's Mate in the Army from 1808 to 1812 and a pioneer physician of St. Louis. His sister, Ann Mason Simpson, was married to Lieutenant Andrew Jackson Smith of the Kearny expedition.
3. Private Clough of K Troop, a member of Major Clifton Wharton's dragoon detachment, sent to the Pawnee villages near the Platte and Loup rivers to intimidate the Indians, died on 14 August 1844. Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic, The United States Army on the Frontier 1783-1846* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), pp. 379-80; Carleton, *Prairie Logbooks*, p. 22.
4. "Bois de vache," literally "wood of the cow" or buffalo dung, was used for fuel when wood was not available.
5. Thomas Fitzpatrick, known as "Broken Hand," was the premier scout and guide of this time. He later served the government as an Indian agent. For a biography, see Leroy R. Hafen and W.J. Ghent, *Broken Hand: The Life Story of Thomas Fitzpatrick, Chief of the Mountain Men* (Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1931).
6. Captain Cooke, who admired the Sioux as "cleanly, dignified and graceful in manner; brave, proud and independent in bearing and deed," was appalled at the status of women among them. "Their misfortune," he wrote, "their deep stain — the law of barbarism — is their treatment of women; they apply to them the brute law of the stronger!" Cooke, *Scenes and Adventures*, p. 323.
7. For variations of the story of Scott's Bluff, see Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road*, pp. 426-27.
8. A "terre-plein" is a sod-floored upper story fortification.
9. Joseph Bisonette was manager of Fort Platte for Pratte and Cabenna, a competitor of the American Fur Company which owned nearby Fort Laramie. Leroy R. Hafen and Francis M. Young, *Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1834-1890* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1938), p. 85.
10. Lieutenant Carleton, in his account of the council, called the day "an extremely disagreeable one." Although it was mid-June, "there was a raw wind blowing from the northeast, and every now and then the leaden clouds that flew past upon it, let down a drizzling shower of cold rain, accompanied at times with heavy flakes of snow..." Carleton, "Occidental Reminiscences, Chapter XI," *The Spirit of the Times*, XVI (April 18, 1846), p. 91.
11. Bull Tail, an aged chief among the Brulé Sioux, made his last known public appearance during the council with Kearny. His son Iron Shell was a prominent warrior in the tribe. George E. Hyde, *Spotted*

Tail's Folk (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 34, 38, 86.

12. Captain William Eustis served in the Army from 1830 to 1849. After his resignation he worked as a civil engineer in Natchez, Mississippi. Fort Eustis, Virginia, is named for his father, Colonel Abraham Eustis, an artillery officer during the War of 1812 and the early Indian wars. William's brother, Henry L. Eustis, graduated at the head of the West Point class of 1842 and served in the Corps of Engineers until the Civil War, during which he commanded a Massachusetts regiment.
13. Lieutenant Richard S. Ewell spent twenty-one years in the Army and earned a brevet promotion for gallantry and meritorious conduct during the Mexican War battles of Contreras and Churubusco. During the Civil War he served the Confederacy as a lieutenant general.
14. Dr. Samuel G.I. De Camp, a career Army surgeon, retired in 1862 after thirty-nine years of service.
15. Independence Rock, now on Wyoming state highway 220, bears the names of numerous early travelers and has been aptly called a "Rocky Mountain album." Louis Pelzer, *Marches of the Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley* (Iowa City: The State Historical Society of Iowa, 1917), p. 131; Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence, eds., *The Expeditions of John Charles Frêmont*, I (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p. 247.
16. Captain John C. Frémont of the Topographical Engineers, a major figure in the history of American expansion, passed Devil's Gate on his first expedition in August 1842. In his report he described the landmark as follows:

    > Five miles above Rock Independence we came to a place called the Devil's Gate, where the Sweet Water cuts through the point of a granite ridge. The length of the passage is about three hundred yards, and the width thirty-five yards. The walls of rock are vertical, and about four hundred feet in height; and the stream in the gate is almost entirely choked up by masses which have fallen from above. In the wall, on the right bank, is a dike of trap rock, cutting through a fine-grained gray granite. Near the point of this ridge crop out some strata of the valley formation, consisting of a grayish micaeous sandstone, and fine-grained conglomerate, and marl.

    John C. Frémont, *A Report of an Exploration of the Country Lying between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains on the Line of the Kansas and Great Platte Rivers*, 27th Congress, 3rd sess., Senate Document 243, quoted in Jackson and Spence, eds., *Expeditions of John Charles Frêmont*, p. 247.
17. Franklin was the only one among the officer-diarists who did not mention the crossing of South Pass. Most early travelers, Turner and

Carleton among them, expressed amazement at the slight, gradual grade and unprepossessing appearance of the gap. Turner noted the arrival of the expedition at the divide after "an almost imperceptible ascent of two miles." Carleton was surprised to see a stream flowing westward; he "could hardly believe that the crest of the Rocky Mountains had really been crossed." Cooke, closemouthed for a change, reduced the drama to a single phrase: "June 30th, 1845. — Camp in Oregon."

18. According to Turner, a mishap during a water stop after the 7 July crossing of the Red Buttes almost took Fitzpatrick's life:

> our estimable and excellent guide — Mr. Fitzpatrick — met with an accident which came well nigh depriving us of his usefulness during the remainder of the campaign. Having passed too near a vicious horse, he received a kick from both hind feet in the back. Had he been struck 2 inches higher the spinal communication must have been severed, causing instant death. He was knocked down & a good deal stunned by the blow, but received no further injury than a slight sprain of the left wrist which afterward became quite painful.

Turner, "Journal of an Expedition...under the Command of Colonel Stephen W. Kearny."

19. Captain Cooke also heard mention of emigrant interest in California, but did not take it as seriously: "It is said they remove thence [Oregon] to California, which would not prove much; for movers they will be to the end of the chapter." Cooke, *Scenes & Adventures*, p. 366.
20. Lieutenant Turner wrote that Bull Tail asked Kearny for written authorization to destroy trader whiskey. The Burlé chief's deference in the matter is hardly less surprising than Kearny's response, *carte blanche* to all Indians:

> All Indians - Sioux & others - are hereby authorized & requested to destroy any & all spiritous liquor which they may find in the Indian Country without respect to the quantity, or the persons in whose possession it may be found.

Turner, "Journal of an Expedition...under the Command of Colonel Stephen W. Kearny."

21. Turner complained that the hunters had disregarded instructions to remain within sight of the column. Turner, "Journal of an Expedition...under the Command of Colonel Stephen W. Kearny."
22. The Indian woman and children traveled with the Dragoons until 18 July. She then left with a party of Arapahoes that visited the column. Turner, "Journal of an Expedition...under the Command of Colonel Stephen W. Kearny."
23. Ceran St. Vrain (1802–1870) was a prominent entrepeneur in the fur trade of the Rocky Mountains.

24. Lieutenant Turner reported the summary seizure and destruction of a trader's whiskey just prior to the arrival of the Dragoons at Bent's Fort. Kearny detained the traders overnight at Bent's before permitting them to depart for Taos. Turner, "Journal of an Expedition...under the Command of Colonel Stephen W. Kearny."
25. By 1845 only two of Ceran St. Vrain's brothers, Savinien and Marcellin, were still alive. Both spent many years in the Rockies, and either one could have been with him when Kearny arrived.
26. George Bent (1814–1847) managed Bent's Fort, the Arkansas River capital of the Rocky Mountain fur trading empire of Bent & St. Vrain, a firm owned by George's older brothers William and Charles with Ceran St. Vrain. See David Lavender, *Bent's Fort* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1954), for an account of the fort's significance in the development of the Southwest.
27. Captain Cooke had ordered the provisions from Bent & St. Vrain in 1843. They had not been used as originally intended and were still available when Kearny's force arrived. Lavender, *Bent's Fort*, pp. 226–28.
28. President Andrew Jackson died on 8 June 1845.
29. Lieutenant Turner also had high praise for Fitzpatrick: "Although we have no farther use for the services of Mr. F. . . . still we part with so amiable & estimable a person with great regret." Turner, "Journal of an Expedition...under the Command of Colonel Stephen W. Kearny."
30. Andrew Jackson Smith (1815–1897) graduated from the Military Academy in 1838 and served until 1869. He participated in several major Civil War campaigns and rose to the rank of Major General of Volunteers. After the war, he was postmaster and city auditor for St. Louis.

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